■ PlayStation 3 ■ PlayStation Portable ■ PlayStation Network ■ PlayStation 2

PlayStation®

The Official Magazine

JANUARY 08

EXCLUSIVE

PlayStation - The Official Magazine Issue 2 (January 2008)

GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

MGS4 + METAL GEAR ONLINE = ONE GAME: GET THE FULL DETAILS INSIDE.

REVEALED
THE TOP 10 PS3 GAMES OF 2008
YOU WILL NEVER GUESS ALL 10*

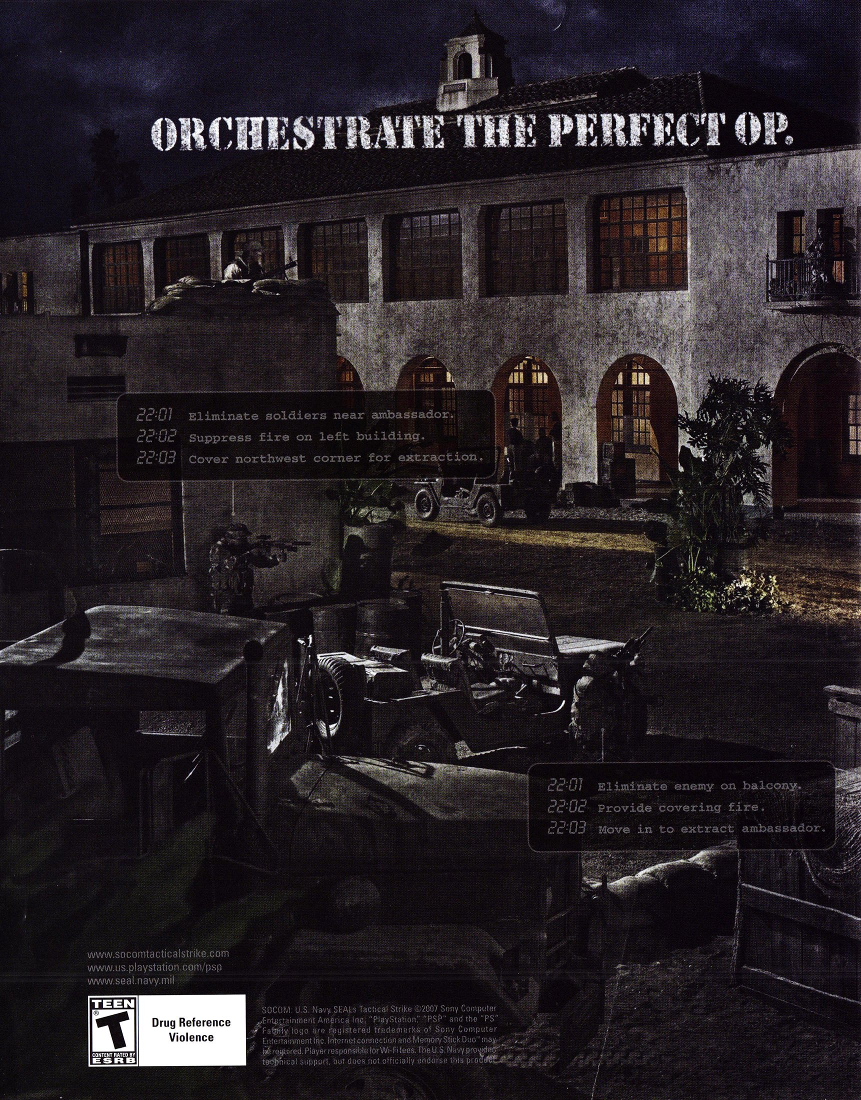
HOW TO
PLAY ANY VIDEO THROUGH YOUR PS3
DON'T MISS OUR INDISPENSABLE GUIDE

CALL OF DUTY 4
TIPS TO MAKE YOU AN ONLINE CHAMP

THE OFFICIAL VERDICT
ASSASSIN'S CREED
ROCK BAND
UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

* SERIOUSLY, WRITE DOWN YOUR TOP 10 NOW. CAN YOU GUESS THEM ALL?

Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION



22:01 Eliminate soldiers near ambassador.
22:02 Suppress fire on left building.
22:03 Cover northwest corner for extraction.

22:01 Eliminate enemy on balcony.
22:02 Provide covering fire.
22:03 Move in to extract ambassador.

www.socomtacticalstrike.com
www.us.playstation.com/psp
www.seal.navy.mil

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Drug Reference
Violence

SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Tactical Strike ©2007 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "PlayStation," "PSP" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Internet connection and Memory Stick Duo™ may be required. Player responsible for Wi-Fi fees. The U.S. Navy provided technical support, but does not officially endorse this produc

22:01 Engage enemy soldiers.
22:02 Eliminate all enemy threats.
22:03 Cover team's extraction.

22:01 Fire grenade at machine gunner.
22:02 Move to secure ambassador.
22:03 Escort ambassador to rendezvous point.

SOCOM
U.S. NAVY SEALS
TACTICAL STRIKE

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WRAITH
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Evaluate the situation, plan your approach and execute on your command.

ONLY ON
PSP
PlayStation®Portable

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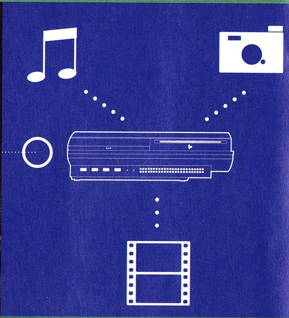

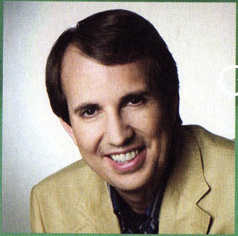

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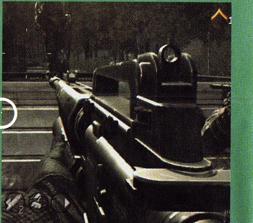

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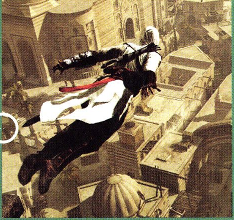

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Mission Statement

PlayStation
The Official Magazine

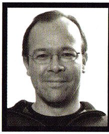
PlayStation:
Whether it's PS3, PSN, PSP, or PS2; whether it's games, Blu-ray movies, or downloadable content; whether it's news, reviews, previews, or community events, rest assured. We've got the entire spectrum of the PlayStation world covered.

Official:
The official stamp is a promise. It underlines our commitment to delivering the news that matters from the source that counts. It's the inside track to the people and games that will shape the future of PlayStation.

Magazine:
From cover to glossy cover, we'll deliver the information you need to satisfy your enthusiasm for everything PlayStation. We'll only bring you the important stories, and guarantee every editorial page imparts information that you'll use and enjoy. Practical, independent buying advice will shape your purchases, and practical, informative features will enhance your PlayStation experience. All presented with the visually appealing style only a magazine can deliver.

Editor's Note

"I can't remember when I last had any hope."



Issue two already, and we're hurtling into 2008, surveying the PlayStation landscape for prime gaming fodder to excite us in the new year. We sat down to discuss the best of the best of PlayStation 3 and agreed a top ten that should excite gamers everywhere. We've got a unique look at each of these platform stars starting on page 34. Of course, we didn't ignore the PSP or PlayStation Network, both of which have grown in stature on the back of the quality games available on each platform.

Another area of great interest is the PS3's media potential, with the ability to stream pictures, audio, and video from your home PC, and the expanded functionality from the announced support for Divx. So we have a comprehensive guide to setting up your home media network so that you can stream videos to your TV as simply as the technology allows.

And that's issue two in a nutshell. But now, time for a rant:

<rant>
I plonked down real, personal cash for the original *Guitar Hero* on PS2. I loved it. I then traded fantasy baseball draft picks with Red Octane's PR guy to get *Guitar Hero 2*. I loved it even more. Co-operative play magnificently enhanced the experience in so many ways. I got *Guitar Hero 3*, and really, who was minding this ship? At its heart, *GH3* is terrific. The Gibson Les Paul guitar feels totally amazing.

But battle mode blows so hard I'm horrified that a) any development team claiming affinity to a gaming audience could miss the point so bad, and b) nobody at publisher Activision stood up and pointed that fact out during its development cycle. Never has a new mode so borked design philosophy to render the whole experience more frustrating than fun. Battle mode SUCKS. Playing lefty? Whammy bar idiocy? How can they not get that the core beauty of *Guitar Hero* is a personal challenge? Me against the notes — like a golfer at Augusta — fighting our own skills against the course, not someone suddenly changing my clubs. I'm only this annoyed because I care. *Guitar Hero* has delivered some of the most sensational gaming entertainment in the last couple of years, yet to see it painfully stabbed in its fun hole is too much to bare.

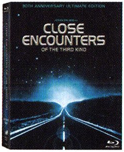
> "How can they not get that the core beauty of *Guitar Hero* is a personal challenge?"

I don't normally do this kind of thing, but it had to be said, and normal service will now be resumed… it's finally off my chest, and I can hopefully move on (to *Rock Band*).
</rant>

Enter the quote contest, and win a Blu-ray movie from my desk. Send your entries, and thoughts on the mag (and my rant) to editor@psmonline.com.

Rob

"Quote" contest


30TH ANNIVERSARY ULTIMATE EDITION
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Enter to win a prize! That headline at the top of this column is a quote from a movie. **Identify the movie, send your answer (along with your name and shipping address) to editor@psmonline.com** with Ed Note January in the subject line. One lucky winner will be selected to receive a Blu-ray movie from the pile on my desk. That's what Jim Flack of Washington will get for recognizing the Holiday's quote from *The Game*. Good luck.

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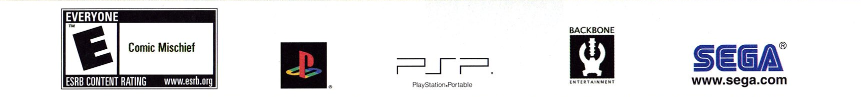

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SYSTEM ANALYSIS: PS3

A TALE OF TWO PS3s

What does that extra $100 really get you?

You've heard the saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover." In the case of PlayStation 3, however, it should be "Don't judge a system by its packaging." Despite what the boxes might convey, there are more differences between the newer 40GB unit and existing 80GB system than just hard disk capacity.

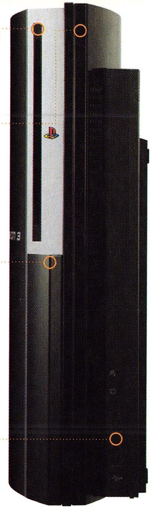
Whether you've yet to buy a system or are recommending one to a friend or relative, here are some key facts you need to know. Randy Nelson

40GB $399.99

Blu-ray Disc playback: YES
Wi-Fi: YES
Ethernet: YES
USB Ports: 2
Backwards Compatibility with PS2/PS games: NO PS2 SUPPORT; PLAYS ONLY PS ONE GAMES
Included Software: SPIDER-MAN 3 BLU-RAY DISC MOVIE

80GB $499.99

Blu-ray Disc playback: YES
Wi-Fi: YES
Ethernet: YES
USB Ports: 4
Backwards Compatibility with PS2/PS games: LIMITED PS2 COMPATIBILITY; PLAYS PS ONE GAMES
Other: BUILT-IN MEMORY STICK, COMPACT FLASH, AND SD CARD READER; PLAYS SUPER AUDIO CDS
Included Software: MOTORSTORM

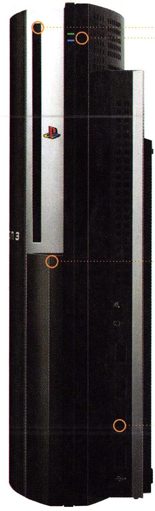


The 40GB PS3 plays CDs, DVDs, BDs, and PS one games, but not Super Audio CDs.

The 20GB launch PS3 didn't include wireless networking, but this one does. Thanks, Sony!

Don't try to open it — because it won't. The 40GB PS3 doesn't include a multi-format flash memory card reader like the 80GB unit. You'll need to buy a USB card reader (about $20) if you want that functionality.

This system only has two USB ports, so for games such as *Rock Band* — which uses four USB devices — you will need to purchase a separate USB hub, which will set you back roughly $25.



The 80GB unit plays CDs, DVDs, BDs, and Super Audio CDs, in addition to PS2 titles (limited support) and PS one games.

More features, more heat. Plus it's a little louder than the 40GB system.

Flip this open and you'll have access to built-in Memory Stick, Compact Flash, and SD Card reader slots, providing easy access to media (such as photos and music) stored on portable devices.

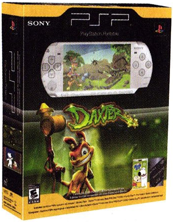
More USB ports means there are more devices you can have plugged in, such as the PlayStation Eye, Guncon 3, controller charge cables, or guitar controllers.

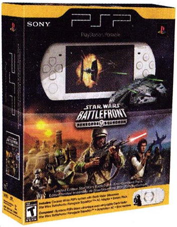
SYSTEM ANALYSIS: PSP

Take-Along Trifecta

There's more to the three PSPs available than meets the eye

Sony slimmed down the PSP with the introduction of the PSP-2001 series units, and we couldn't be happier with the results. No matter which one you pick, you're getting a fine portable. Here's what comes in each pack (note that the *Star Wars Battlefront* pack will have a finite "limited edition" production run.)





① **Core Pack $169.99**

Includes:
- Piano Black PSP
- Battery
- Power Supply / Charger

② **Daxter Entertainment Pack $199.99**

Includes:
- Arctic Silver PSP
- Battery
- Pow pply / Charger
- *Daxter* game
- *Family Guy: The Freakin' Sweet Collection* Video UMD
- 1GB Memory Stick Pro Duo

③ **Star Wars Battlefront Renegade Squadron Entertainment Pack $199.99**

Includes:
- Limited edition Ceramic White PSP with silk-screened Darth Vader battery cover
- Battery
- Power Supply / Charger
- *Star Wars Battlefront Renegade Squadron* game

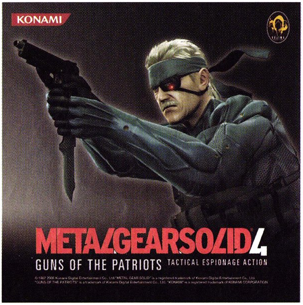
SYSTEM ANALYSIS: PS2

PS2 Keeps Rockin'

Sony recently introduced a new Ceramic White PS2 in North America, with a bonus. Retailing for $149.99, the system is bundled with a copy of *SingStar Pop* and two microphones in addition to the obligatory (in this case, Ceramic White) DualShock 2 controller, power supply, and composite A/V cables.

PlayStation Digest

Top Stories, Industry Bits, and Oddities

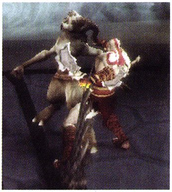


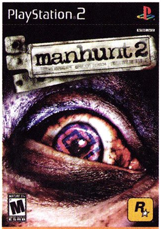
Metal Gear Solid 4...Delayed!

When we heard that *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* was being pushed back until spring of 2008, we were devastated. We mean it. There were tears. Apparently, Konami's investors were equally dismayed — the company's shares fell 6.8% after the delay was announced, the largest drop since December 8, 2003. Japan's businessmen don't seem to have faith in Snake's ability to recover from the setback. Look on the bright side: you have a couple extra months to buy that PS3 you've been saving for.

Will God of War still be the same?

Cory Barlog, huge contributor for the first *God of War* and game director of the second, announced in November that he's leaving SCEA Santa Monica... and taking his brain with him. *God of War: Chains of Olympus* for PSP is still in the works, as is, we assume, *God of War III* for PS3.





Manhunt 2's Rating Prove Quite Troublesome

Here's the quick and dirty version of the *Manhunt 2* story for those not in-the-know: Rockstar creates game with violent content. ESRB rates game Adults Only. Lawyer Jack Thompson makes smug comments in mainstream media. Controversy ensues. Rockstar adjusts violent game to slightly less violent. ESRB changes rating to Mature. Jack Thompson makes more smug comments. Controversy ensues. And now, hackers find a complex way to remove Rockstar's violence filtering (requiring a modified PSP). ESRB states the hacks don't change the new rating. Jack Thompson makes yet more smug comments. Controversy ensues. Where this tangled web leads and what it means for future game ratings is anybody's guess, but we'll bet money that Jack Thompson will have something smug to say about it.

PS3 Helps Set World Record

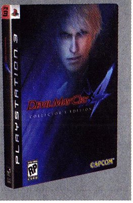
It's official. The Guinness World Records confirmed this in September 2007 when it recognized Stanford University's Folding@home program as "the most powerful distributed computing network in the world." Joining the 200,000 PCs in the program, 670,000 PS3s have helped push Folding@home's computer power to over a whole, whooping petaflop. Now, we may not know what a petaflop is, but we know this: we are helping a worthy program, maybe not curing cancer, but helping, somehow. So, cheers to us and to fellow folders.

Final Fantasy Store Bonanza

The Square Enix online merchandise store has been updated with new action figures, plushies, keychains, and other useless, but visually pleasing *Final Fantasy* paraphernalia. Supplies are limited, so order quickly before other rabid *FF* fanboys (like us) snatch them up for their Tifa and Sephiroth shrines.

The Devil May Cry... Will Fans Cry, too?

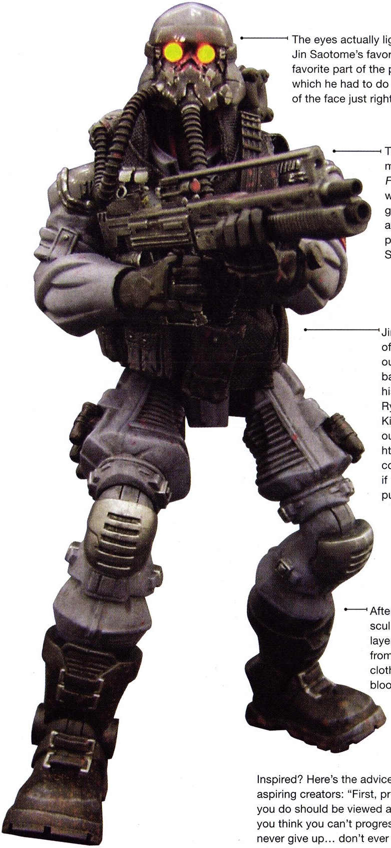
Devil May Cry 4 is one of those games we'd be willing to trade our souls for, if we still had them. Come February 5, 2008, we won't need to, because we'll be buying (with cash) the Collector's Edition of the game. It'll come with Volume 1 of ADV Film's *Devil May Cry: The Animated Series* (by the same guys who made *Trigun* and *Gungrave*) and a bonus DVD (with a "making of" documentary, music from the soundtrack, and a digital art book with wallpapers, icons, and screen savers), all comfy in a sturdy Steelbook metal case. At $79.99 for the collector's edition, you'll either be crying for joy (at the game's release) or crying for your wallet (because you can't resist plopping an extra twenty bucks for the elite packaging).



EA Shuts Down Chicago

You might recognize EA Chicago as the team that created, oh, that little PS3 title called *Fight Night Round 3*. Unfortunately, lately they've also been responsible for some not-so-adored games like Def Jam Icon. EA headquarters in LA has finally taken action. President Frank Gibeau says, "each [branch of EA] is responsible for staying on a reasonable path to profitability... Unfortunately, EA Chicago hasn't been able to meet that standard." So now, the branch is being put to bed. What will happen to the 150 plus developers? EA claims they'll be taken care of (in a non-murderous way). EA didn't respond to requests for information on what now happens to the Marvel fighting game that had been in the works at the studio.

Want a custom Killzone Helghast Soldier figurine?



The eyes actually light up! They're creator Jin Saotome's favorite part. His least favorite part of the project was sculpting, which he had to do for hours to get the rest of the face just right.

The Helghast Rifle was made from a *Frontmission 3* shotgun, with other pieces cut and glued. Even with all the attention to detail, the project only took Jin Saotome about two days.

Jin Saotome sculpts most of his videogame toys out of Sigma 6' figurine bases. Future projects of his include Solid Snake, Ryu Hayabusa, and more Killzone troops. Check out his website http://www.anglefire.com/mech/jinsaotome/ if you're interested in purchasing.

After intense amounts of sculpting, Jin Saotome layered on a ton of paint, from the basic shade of the clothing to the mud and blood detail.

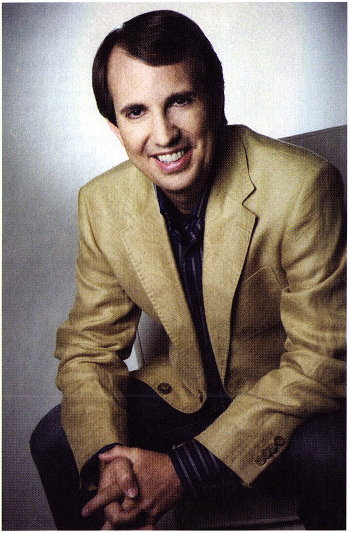
Inspired? Here's the advice Jin Saotome gives to aspiring creators: "First, practice... Every figure you do should be viewed as practice even when you think you can't progress any further. Second, never give up... don't ever throw in the towel and think you can't do better."

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION INTERVIEW

JOHN HIGHT

INSIDE PLAYSTATION NETWORK

As the PlayStation Network finds its feet, its direction, we find out what to expect from the man leading the charge.



It's clear that the content available on PlayStation Network is a vital part of the broader PS3 content story, but how does it get there? What are the plans for the future? To get a sense of what to expect in 2008, we asked John Hight, Director of Production at SCEA about his vision and plans.

PTOM: Firstof all, can you outline your role at SCEA, your responsibilities?

John Hight: I oversee external development for Sony Santa Monica Studios. I work with a great team of producers, designers, and artists that work with developers to bring their games to PlayStation. We are responsible for many of the games on PlayStation Network: *Blast Factor*, *flOw*, *PixelJunk*, *Everyday Shooter*, and others.

PTOM: What's the overall strategy to bringing content to PlayStation Network — whether it's demos, full original games, "classic" PlayStation games, or other media?

JH: We look for innovative game ideas, big or small, that we think will add value to PlayStation Network and the PlayStation experience. Since we are a first party product development studio, we focus solely on original games. PlayStation Network is a broad service and it supports content from third party game publishers and movie studios, in addition to our games.

The most exciting thing about PlayStation Network and the whole "downloadable game movement" is that it removes the entry barriers for new developers. The financial risk is much lower for both developers and publishers. There are no manufacturing costs and unlimited availability — customers can buy a game anytime. So we actively solicit proposals from studios, large and small. Most of our catalog comes from independent studios. We meet with dozens of developers each month. Even if we elect not to publish a game, we try to give feedback so that developers understand our logic.

PTOM: So a project like *Everyday Shooter* — a great one-man story — is that the kind of game that's a real focus for future acquisition?

JH: *Everyday Shooter* is an amazing game and Jonathan Mak is a very talented guy; he's also a genuinely nice person. If Queasy Games ever wanted to be acquired, I hope he'd give us the first phone call. Meanwhile, we'll happily support him and bring his ideas to the world.

PTOM: Is there an outline to what we can expect in 2008?

JH: My group would like to bring out a new game every month. We've ramped up to meet that challenge and we're scouring the planet to find and make the best games.

PTOM: What's proved to be the most popular PlayStation Network content so far?

JH: We've had tremendous success with our original game, *flOw*. It's a hit in North America,

John Hight 411

TITLE: Director of Production, Sony Computer Entertainment

EDUCATION: Bachelors Degree in Computer Science from the University of New Mexico, MBA from USC

FIRST GAME: Philips CDi version of *Battleship* in 1991

GAME RESUME: Design lead on *C&C2: Red Alert*

IN HIS SPARE TIME: Teaches "Anatomy of a game" course at USC's School of Cinematic Arts

> “The most exciting thing about PlayStation Network and the whole “downloadable game movement” is that it removes the barrier of entry for new developers.” –John Hight

Europe, and Japan. This is exciting because it’s unlike most other games — it’s soothing and seductive. In sharp contrast, the next most popular game that we helped with on PlayStation Network has been *Warhawk*

PTOM: What parts of the content on PlayStation Network are you most proud of so far?

JH: I think we’ve done a great job of picking cool games for people to play. We’ve been very selective and kept a good balance between original and classic games. The end result is a solid catalog.

I’m also very proud of our team — most of them been in the business for over 10 years. All of them worked in a hands-on production role before coming to external. They are thoughtful mentors and partners for their developers; they push their own egos aside and get charged up about helping people. Everything we publish on PlayStation Network, from a one man game like *Everyday Shooter* to an epic like *Warhawk*, gets a lot of attention. We focus test, play test, and provide feedback so developers can refine their games. To compliment our efforts, Sony has one of the best QA groups in the world and their diligence results in games that are fun to play and solid. Our goal is to make it all transparent to our customers. In the end, our games should just “feel right.”

PTOM: Any pointers on plans for vouchers or points cards or other alternatives for customers to buy products on PlayStation Network?

JH: We realize that it would be convenient for people. Kids need a way to get PlayStation Network games without someone (parents or grandma) handing over their credit card. *[PTOM Note: By the time you read this, SCEA should have announced the plans and availability of cards that you can purchase at stores, in set denominations, that you then cash in on PlayStation Network to purchase games, add-ons, and other content.]*

PTOM: How about potential additional functionality for PlayStation Network users along the lines of group chat, messaging functions, etc?

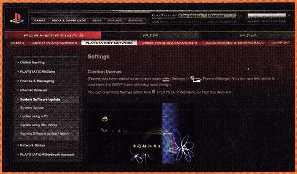
JH: I can’t announce upcoming features at this time, but Sony adds new functionality to PlayStation Network practically every month. This is a great value to a service that is already free. The latest 2.0 update added an information board, custom themes, play lists, and more features for remote access between your PlayStation 3 and PSP, and gamers are already finding many creative ways to make their own themes on PS3 as well! *[See sidebar, right, for more details.]*

Custom PS3 Themes Hit the Net

Fans are making them — here’s where to find them

One of the most welcome new features of PlayStation 3 firmware 2.00 is the ability to use custom themes for the Xross Media Bar (XMB) interface. More than just new background images, they actually change the look of the system icons. Sony includes one, “Air Paint,” with the system update and has made three more (“Pixels,” “Nature,” and “Classy Pink”) available for free via the PlayStation Store.

Better yet, however, Sony released a tool for PC users (available from www.us.playstation.com) that enables them to create totally original themes and convert them to the theme format used by PS3. It didn’t take long before hundreds of fan-made interface-lifts hit the internet; some good, some great, and some… just plain ugly. Thankfully, several sites offer not only theme downloads but community rating systems, so you can tell what’s new and hot. Our current faves include:



Settings

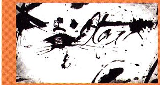
Custom themes

[Theme] has been added as an option under (Settings) > (Theme Settings). You can use this option to customize the XMB™ icons or background design.

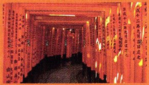
You can download themes either from (PLAYSTATION®Store) or from this Web site.

- PlayStation Universe (www.psu.com)
- PS3 Themes (www.ps3-themes.org)
- PlayStation 3 Themes (www.playstation3themes.org)

The official PS3 message forums at www.us.playstation.com are also abuzz with theme discussions, tips, and even a few talented folks taking special requests, so be sure to check them out, as well.



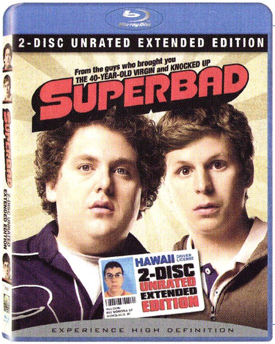
“INKmess” by DarKaoz (darkaoz.deviantart.com)



“Kanji” (with accurate kanji!) by Tosh Hatch (www.toshhatch.com/ps3)

Blu-ray Central

Top Blu-ray picks for this holiday


2-DISC UNRATED EXTENDED EDITION
From the guys who brought you THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN and KNOCKED UP
SUPERBAD
HAWAII DRIVER LICENSE
2-DISC UNRATED EXTENDED EDITION
EXPERIENCE HIGH DEFINITION

PlayStation: The Official Magazine
PICK OF THE MONTH

Superbad: 2-Disc Unrated Extended Version

PRICE: $28.95 **RATED:** M

This two-disc collection of low budget teen shenanigans is comedy gold in a Blu-ray box. Seth Rogan, executive producer, co-writer (and almost certainly inspiration) of this incredible farce has crafted a classic that will live up there with *Fast Times* and *Ferris Bueller* as a cinematic timestamp for the age. Gross and juvenile, but never overtly disrespectful of color, creed, or character, *Superbad* is simply sensational. Jonah Hill as the wise-ass, foul-mouthed lead is delightfully grotesque in his desire to get with the chicks. Michael Cera shines in his nice guy role that's a clear extension of his *Arrested Development* character. And Rogan partnered with *Saturday Night Live*'s Bill Hader, are outstanding as the cool-but-hapless cops.

A full second disc of extras is good value, but not particularly insightful aside from the original cast reading from 1992 that featured Rogan himself as the lead of Seth, with fellow *Freaks and Geeks* alums (one of the greatest short-lived TV series ever) Jason Segel and Martin Starr as Evan and "McLovin" Fogell, respectively. But it's all about Jonah Hill's dialogue and delivery that guarantees the whole thing feels fresh on multiple viewings.

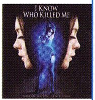
MOVIES ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★

WORST BET

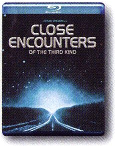
I KNOW WHO KILLED ME

PRICE: $26.95 **RATED:** R

We couldn't help it. Lindsay Lohan in a murder thriller as a teen who turns exotic dancer who turns into another person who loses a hand and a leg who… wait, you still reading? Okay, Aubrey/Dakota (Lohan) is traumatized by a serial killer that takes her hand and leg. How it all happens, the mental anguish it causes, the flashbacks are all completely bizarre. Some slick camera work and stylish visuals keep it watchable well beyond its natural switch-off point. What's funny is that where *Closer* director Milos Forman cut all Natalie Portman's exotic nude scenes (and allegedly destroyed the masters) to prevent his leading lady from having her nakedness splashed across the interweb in a clear statement of class for the actress, Lohan's exotic dance routines actually make extended special features. Evoking memories of *Boxing Helena* this unintelligible script and sleepwalk direction is only made palatable by the train wreck fascination of watching Lohan trying to grow up.



MOVIES ★
FEATURES ★★



Close Encounters of the Third Kind – 30th Anniversary Ultimate Edition

PRICE: $32.95 **RATED:** PG

Steven Spielberg's classic has been released in three different versions, and they are all collected on this Ultimate Blu-ray edition. The original 1977 release was a revelation in itself as contact with alien life emerged as the third encounter. A Special Edition, released in 1980, added a new ending. Spielberg's Director's Cut restored the original ending and tweaked a few other setup scenes. This Ultimate Edition includes a neat book of photographs of cast and crew. The two-disc set also includes a poster that sports the "View From Above" guide to the scene changes between the three movie versions. It's a well-produced package that Spielberg buffs, sci-fi fans, and students of great moviemaking history will find fascinating.

MOVIES ★★★★
FEATURES ★★★½

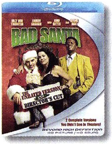
RATATOUILLE

Ratatouille

PRICE: $23.95 **RATED:** G

Pixars's big release for the year is about a rat chef. A French rat chef at that. And his family and his efforts to find himself in the Hell's Kitchen world of cutthroat restaurant running in gay Paree. Doesn't sound like a compelling notion, does it? Pixar thought so and devoted a full release to this well-animated tale that's absolutely by the numbers. It's as charming as the rodent protagonists allow, and as formulaic as so many production line animated movies. *Finding Nemo, Toy Story*? *Ratatouille* doesn't hold a candle to those classics. The overall blahness of the production means that the Blu-ray extra deleted scenes, interviews, and vignettes only serve to profile people that have passion, but misplaced in a project that delivers few laughs, and stagnant storytelling.

MOVIES ★★
FEATURES ★★½

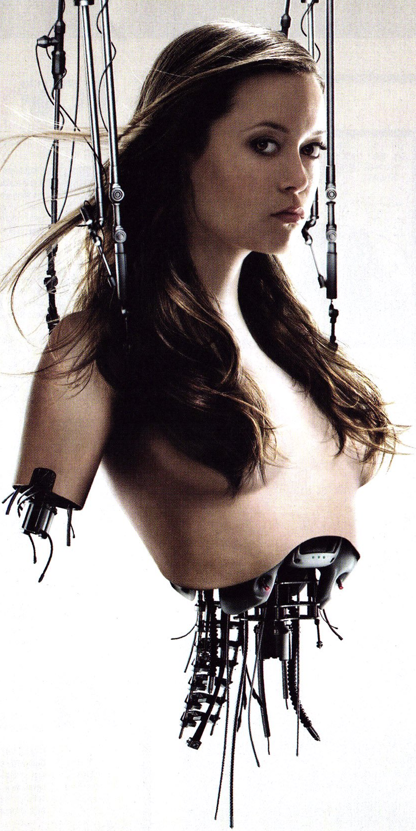


Bad Santa: The Unrated Version and Director's Cut

PRICE: $19.95 **RATED:** UNRATED

Two new versions of this holiday classic — no, really, it's gut-busting brilliant comedy — and really fun commentaries make the most of the Blu-ray format release. Billy Bob Thornton is eminently watchable as the soused petty crook masquerading as Santa in order to rob malls. His malevolent dialogue is hilarious, and plays off the hapless kid who believes him to be the real Santa in a comedic dance of not knowing whether you're laughing at or with them. Whatever, this is one classic movie, and a Blu-ray slam-dunk for anyone that puts it in their top 20 comedies of all-time.

MOVIES ★★★★½
FEATURES ★★★



TERMINATOR

THE SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES

TWO NIGHT PREMIERE

SUN 1·13 | MON 1·14

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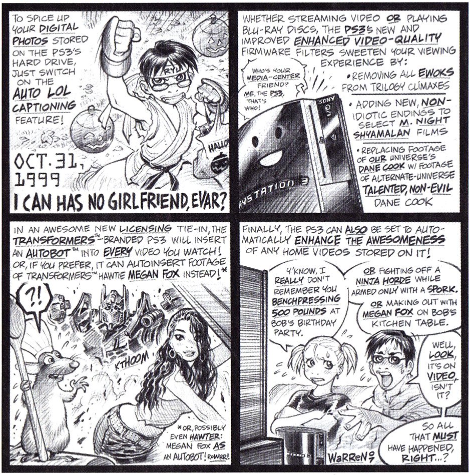
PS3: ENHANCING YOUR MEDIA

by Adam Warren


TO SPICE UP YOUR DIGITAL PHOTOS STORED ON THE PS3'S HARD DRIVE, JUST SWITCH ON THE AUTO LOL CAPTIONING FEATURE!
RYU
HALLO
OCT. 31, 1999
I CAN HAS NO GIRLFRIEND, EVAR?
WHETHER STREAMING VIDEO OR PLAYING BLU-RAY DISCS, THE PS3'S NEW AND IMPROVED ENHANCED VIDEO-QUALITY FIRMWARE FILTERS SWEETEN YOUR VIEWING EXPERIENCE BY:
WHO'S YOUR MEDIA-CENTER FRIEND? ME, THE PS3, THAT'S WHO!
• REMOVING ALL EWOKS FROM TRILOGY CLIMAXES
• ADDING NEW, NON-IDIOTIC ENDINGS TO SELECT M. NIGHT SHYAMALAN FILMS
• REPLACING FOOTAGE OF OUR UNIVERSE'S DANE COOK W/ FOOTAGE OF ALTERNATE-UNIVERSE TALENTED, NON-EVIL DANE COOK
SONY
YSTATION 3
IN AN AWESOME NEW LICENSING TIE-IN, THE TRANSFORMERS™-BRANDED PS3 WILL INSERT AN AUTOBOT™ INTO EVERY VIDEO YOU WATCH! OR, IF YOU PREFER, IT CAN AUTOINSERT FOOTAGE OF TRANSFORMERS™ HAWTIE MEGAN FOX INSTEAD!*
?!
KTHOOM
*OR, POSSIBLY EVEN HAWTER: MEGAN FOX AS AN AUTOBOT! ROWRR!
FINALLY, THE PS3 CAN ALSO BE SET TO AUTOMATICALLY ENHANCE THE AWESOMENESS OF ANY HOME VIDEOS STORED ON IT!
Y'KNOW, I REALLY DON'T REMEMBER YOU BENCHPRESSING 500 POUNDS AT BOB'S BIRTHDAY PARTY.
OR FIGHTING OFF A NINJA HORDE WHILE ARMED ONLY WITH A SPORK.
OR MAKING OUT WITH MEGAN FOX ON BOB'S KITCHEN TABLE.
WELL, LOOK, IT'S ON VIDEO, ISN'T IT?
SO ALL THAT MUST HAVE HAPPENED, RIGHT...?
WARREN 07

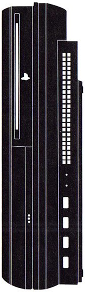
System Updates

What you need to know about Firmware 2.00.

- You can now customize the Home Menu icons and background design.
- You can now create playlists to organize content under Music and Photo.
- Information Board has been added as a feature under Network.
- Remote Start has been added as an option under Remote Play Settings.
- Color, Background, and Font have been added as options under Theme Settings
- You can now view video content (as a progressive download) as it is being downloaded from the PlayStation Store.

PSP: What you need to know about Firmware 3.75.

- Support for PlayStation Network titles expanded.
- Remote Start now available under Remote Play. Requires a PlayStation 3 with system version 2.00.

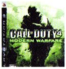


TOP10LIST

What we're playing, watching, reading, and absorbing in the world of entertainment this month.

"Still Alive" | Music | Price: Free

It was a toss-up between the song and the cube, but the song won because it's just too darn catchy. We have it on endless repeat. If you're not sure what we're referring to, you need to play *Portal* (part of the *Orange Box*, out December 12th).


CALL OF DUTY 4
MODERN WARFARE

Call of Duty 4 | Game | Price: $59.99

Thirty Intel pieces are scattered throughout the game. Collect eight and you'll unlock Ragtime Warfare mode, which turns the screen sepia, speeds up movement, and plays a Vaudeville piano soundtrack, like an old silent movie.

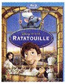
Jamba Juice

Jamba Juice | Beverage | Price: $4.00

Our new office is near a Jamba Juice and we've been indulging. Our favorite flavors are Aloha Pineapple (Rob) Strawberry Shortcake (Randy), Açaí (Ken), and Peach Pleasure (Teresa). Bill doesn't like Jamba Juice… he only drinks beer.

Nissan GT-R | Car | Price: $170,000.00

It's the first time the Skyline is coming to the States. Sex on wheels… the pictures say it all.


RATATOUILLE

Ratatouille | Blu-ray | Price: $23.99

As a marketing ploy, Disney and Pixar were planning to introduce *Ratatouille*-brand wine to Costco stores. However, they changed their minds when the California Wine Institute stated that cartoon characters weren't permitted on labels to avoid attracting under-age drinkers.

Rubber Soul + Let It Be, by The Beatles | Music | Price: $28.00

A Mersyside newspaper ran a contest to determine the biggest band in Liverpool for 1962. The (remaining) Beatles called in multiple times, pretending to be different people, to vote for themselves. Unsurprisingly, they won.

How It's Made | TV show | Price: Free

Want to know how different things are made — everything from CDs to kayaks to guitar strings to pantyhose? We do! Knowing how everyday objects are put together just thrills us for some reason… especially Bill.

Calpico Water | Beverage | Price: $1.58

Originally called "Calpis" in Japan (one guess why they changed it), this milky-toned, light-flavored beverage is delicious over ice. At least, we think so. They also sell it as a frozen yogurt topped with fresh fruit. Mmmm.

SCOTT PILGRIM
4

Scott Pilgrim Vol. 4: Scott Pilgrim Gets It Together | Book | Price: $9.56

The adventures of 23-year-old indie rocker Scott Pilgrim continue in this indie-comic-meets-manga series. He's still dating Ramona Flowers, which means he'll have to fight another of her evil ex-boyfriends. An odd series, yes, but completely entertaining, with videogame references aplenty.

Top Gear | TV show | Price: Free

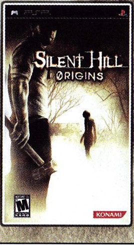
A British car show that puts all other car shows to shame. Top Gear covers extreme experiments, from transforming a car into a rocket to growing petrol in a field to using a Nissan to "sail" across the English Channel.

SILENT HILL® 0RIGINS

To escape the town,
he must know its beginning

" ...it's among the best-looking games we've played on PSP "
- 1UP.com

" ...one of the most artistically and technically impressive games on the PSP "
- GameSpot



Confront the mysteries that haunt the town of Silent Hill

Survive the night against Silent Hill's horrific creatures

Solve puzzles that block your path to freedom

MATURE 17+
M
Blood and Gore
Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 2007

PSP
PlayStation®Portable

KONAMI
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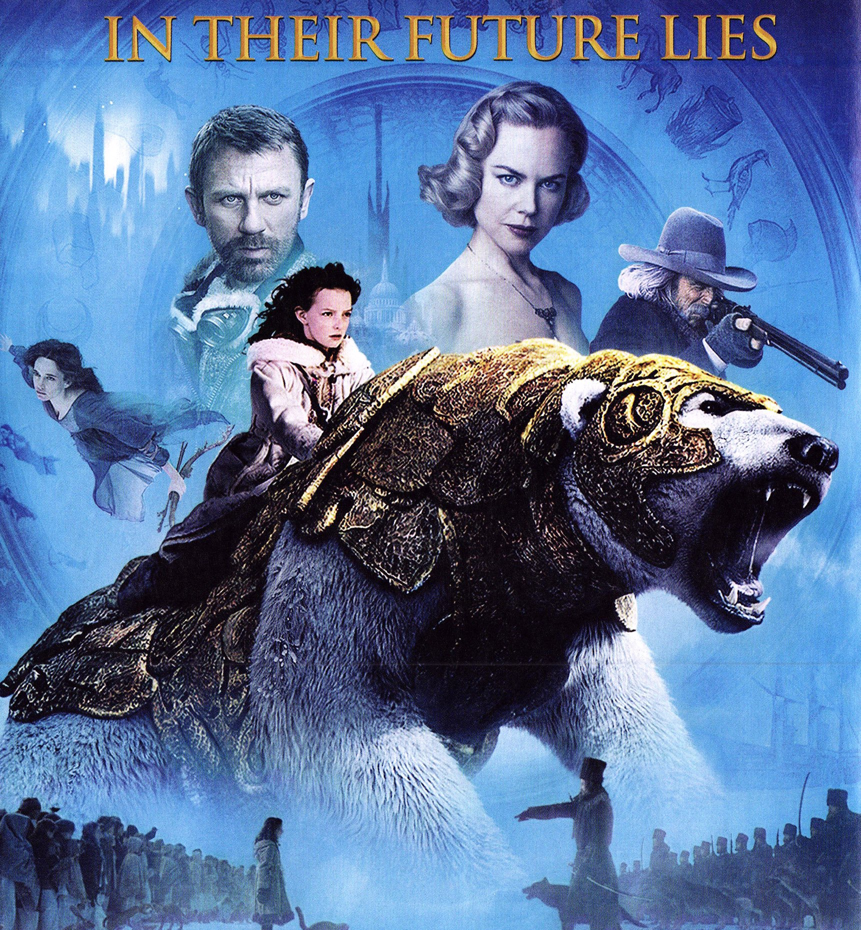

XBOX 360 PC DVD-ROM SOFTWARE Wii NINTENDO DS MOBILE

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SEGA

Pan's shape-shifting abilities give Lyra total freedom to explore.

Face off against fierce enemies as the ruthless Armored Ice Bear, Iorek.

Explore 11 incredible locations from the film including 2 that are unique to the game.

Master the mysterious Golden Compass - use it to uncover vital new information and unlock bonus content.

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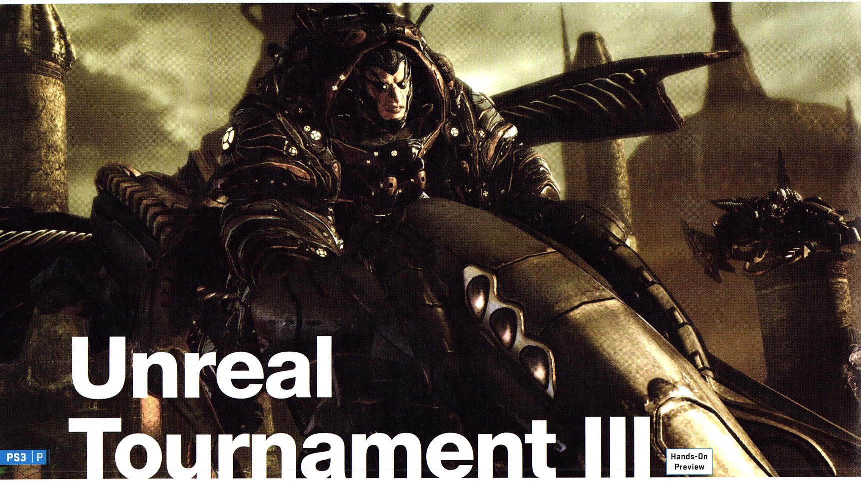


PS3 | P

Unreal Tournament III

Hands-On Preview

Vehicle CTF makes great use of the larger multiplayer maps.

Fast, furious, and looking fabulous on PS3

PS3 AVAILABLE: Spring GENRE: First-Person Shooter PUBLISHER: Midway DEVELOPER: Epic Games

PC gamers are busy spending hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars upgrading their rigs for graphics-intensive games like the soon-to-be-released *Unreal Tournament III*. No doubt it will look sensational. PS3 owners, however, simply need to pop the Blu-ray disc into their console — which costs less than many of the video cards their PC-owning brethren just bought — and be treated to a game that not only contains every last bit of gameplay as its PC sibling, but also matches its visual fidelity one-to-one at 720p, 60 frames-per-second.

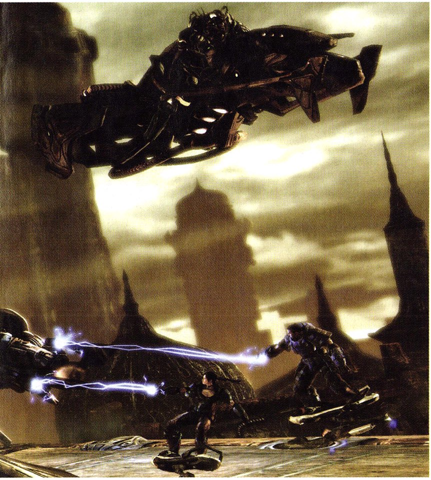
This is no simple feat, but developer Epic Games knows the PS3 better than almost any developer on the planet (and had help from a small army of Sony's own engineers). After all, it created the Unreal Engine, which some of this generation's biggest games will utilize. Still, when you pick up a SIXAXIS (or, shortly, DualShock 3) and start a match, you're likely to do a double take at just how much better this game looks than almost anything else out there.

Killer App

UT3 was one of the very first games showcased for PS3, so while it's been a long time in the making, the development effort has clearly paid off in all areas of the experience. The fast-paced deathmatch play that established the series' fame is here in full effect — and feels great, thanks to the high precision of the PS3 controller's analog sticks — in addition to a wealth of deeper, but still action-packed modes.

Chief among them, the Campaign mode mixes all of the game types — including Capture the Flag and Team Deathmatch, with and without vehicles — with real-time cinematics that, like those of *Heavenly Sword* before it, truly blur the line between game and film. This is also where the new Warfare gameplay mode, which has both sides of the conflict building and protecting power nodes, gets its chance to shine. Here we got to try out new devices

> “You’re likely to do a double take at just how much better this game looks than almost anything else out there.”



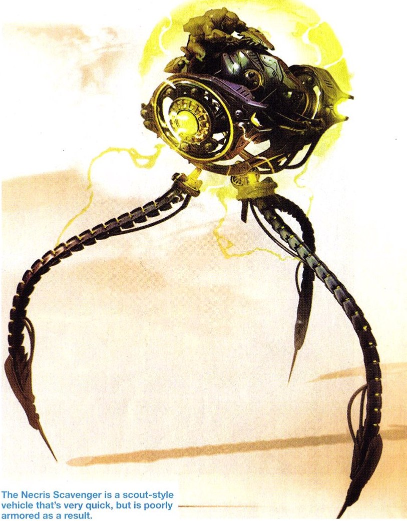
in the series, including homing Spider Mines and the Stasis Field, which slows everything (even bullets) that attempts to pass through it. We were impressed by the, well, intelligence of our A.I. teammates in Warfare — that and the tarydium mining aspect, whereby the more your worker bots collect, the faster your side can build vehicles and turrets. Of course, the harvesters require protection, adding another element of team strategy.

Put Through Its Paces

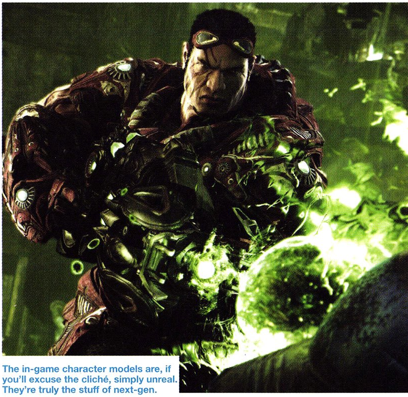
After taking the Campaign for a test drive, the very next thing we wanted to do when preview copies arrived in our office was get in some good old-fashioned deathmatch and CTF. Once we picked our collective jaws off the floor, and acclimated ourselves to the more precise controllers in our hands, we were ready to settle office debts with hot plasma bolts.

Returning maps from previous installments have seen layout tweaks as well as the visual upgrades; if you’re coming into the game from the PC camp, you’ll definitely have a leg-up on your online opponents. The levels created just for this *UT* are true stand-outs that showcase exactly what next-gen hardware can deliver. “Gateway” is a great example. Starting out in a snowy industrial setting, you pass through portals that lead to entirely different environments: one a lush, green forest setting, the other a futuristic tower.

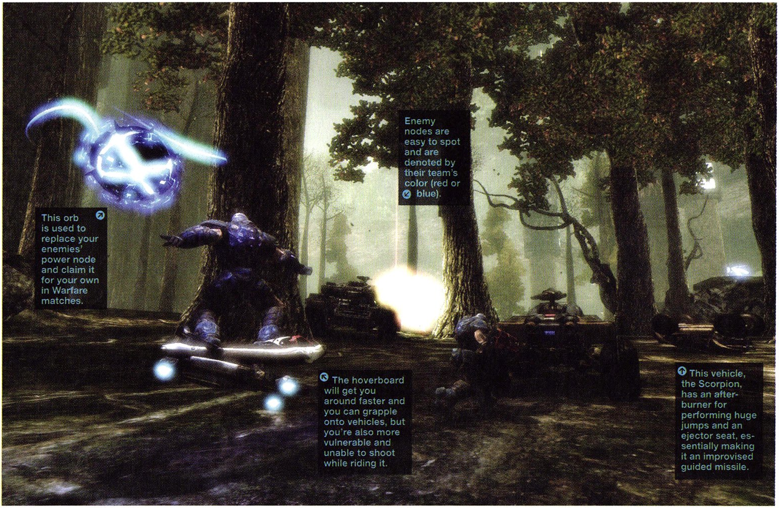
Even in deathmatch, vehicles and environmental set pieces have been put to use. On the map “Heat Ray,” a dropship flies in mid-match



The Necris Scavenger is a scout-style vehicle that’s very quick, but is poorly armored as a result.



The in-game character models are, if you’ll excuse the cliché, simply unreal. They’re truly the stuff of next-gen.



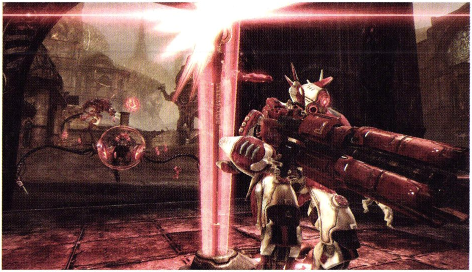
This orb is used to replace your enemies' power node and claim it for your own in Warfare matches.

Enemy nodes are easy to spot and are denoted by their team's color (red or blue).

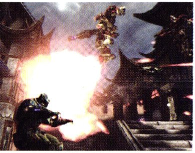
The hoverboard will get you around faster and you can grapple onto vehicles, but you're also more vulnerable and unable to shoot while riding it.

This vehicle, the Scorpion, has an afterburner for performing huge jumps and an ejector seat, essentially making it an improvised guided missile.

If you have enough space available, you can install the entire game onto your PS3's hard disk drive to speed up the already brisk load times. You'll still need the game disc in the drive to play, though.



In this Warfare screen, you can see a Necris Darkwalker, a Scavenger, and the red team's weapons rack (back to front).



"Rising Sun," one of the new maps.

and deposits a menacing Necris Darkwalker — whoever can reach it the fastest can hop in and rain death on their opponents. It's this sort of scripted event that makes this combat zone as tactically immersive as it is visually spectacular. The use of vehicles escalates the tactical possibilities; in vehicle CTF, for example, your translocator — a teleportation pistol from regular CTF — is replaced by a hoverboard, complete with a grapple beam for catching rides behind friendly vehicles. Using this to navigate the sprawling maps at speed never got old in our playtest.

Garments and Gunplay

Epic hasn't fiddled too much with the weapon selection in *UT3*. The shock rifle, flak cannon, and link gun all feel familiar. On PS3, they definitely look a lot cooler when you're firing them — every part is individually rendered and animates as you might expect this futuristic engineering to move.

It's also a welcome treat to customize your multiplayer character more than in previous *UT* games. Apart from selecting your clan of warriors, which determines the overall aesthetic, you can change helmet types, mask types, goggles, chest and legs, arms, boots, and shoulders to create your own distinct look. (Which is especially nice when you win and get to gloat.)

An Unreal Experience

We've just touched the tip of the iceberg of what *UT3* has waiting for us in its various game types. One thing's for certain: we can't wait to play more. Thankfully, chances are good for the game hitting shelves sooner than expected, so look for our full review in time to get your deathmatch on. Randy Nelson

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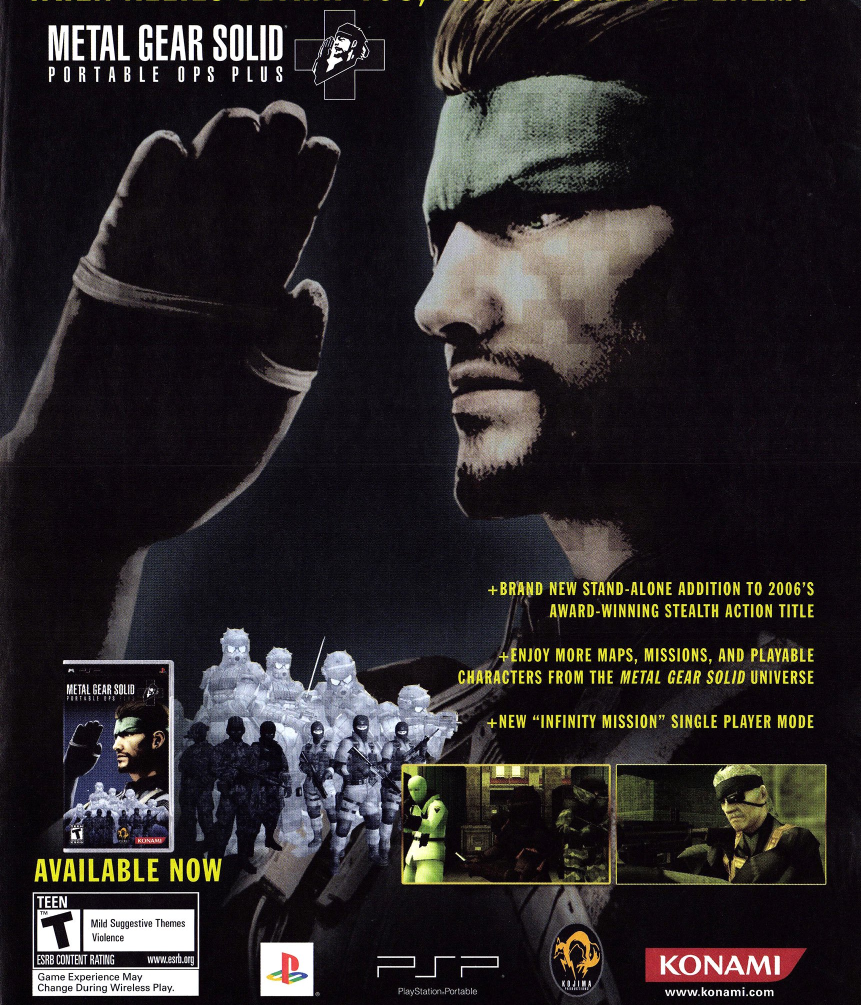

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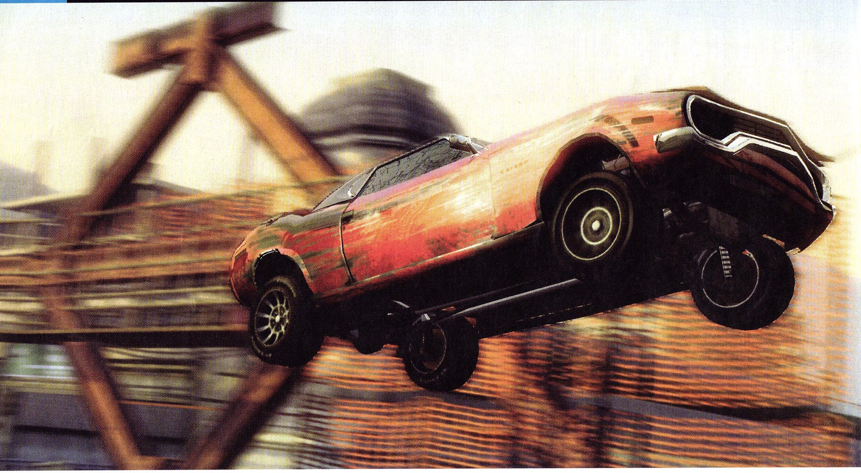


Nail a crazy jump and you'll be treated to a special "highlight" view.

PS3 | **P**

Burnout Paradise

Hands-On Preview

Tearing up the streets of Paradise City with the game's developers

PS3 AVAILABLE: Spring GENRE: Racing PUBLISHER: EA Games DEVELOPER: Criterion Games

The cars range from pure muscle...

...to ones built solely for speed.

Blazing down the mountain road, I decided that I'd had enough of the canned competition in the game's many preset races. I wanted a new challenge and a new type of *Burnout* fun. Rather than call up my friends one by one and ask if they were up for a game, I decided to see how many of them were also racing around Paradise City at breakneck speeds in the solo campaign. It's as simple as pressing right on the D-pad. During my playtest, I found a couple of the blokes at U.K.-based Criterion Games, the brains behind this latest outing in the *Burnout* franchise.

Pressing right again, and with a tap of the X button, invites were sent. Within a matter of moments the game let me know that my multiplayer pals for the day had just entered the city — game on.

Burnout's Blue Angels

Before we could get into the action, we all decided that our cars — stunt models we'd picked at the junkyard (their boost replenishes faster than tougher or faster car types) — should look their absolute best. Easy enough; we each drove through the nearest repair stop and our cars were as good as new. "Let's meet up for the backwards bridge jump," said one of my co-op pals for the afternoon. A red dot appeared on the mini-map indicating the direction that I should head. I found my mates downtown near the river. "We're going to need a long run up for this," said our leader for this attempt. He wasn't kidding. The three of us (we could have added up to five others) each drove a good two blocks

Shhh! Paradise City has three wild, super-secret stunt areas, one of which we got to try out, but sadly swore to say no more about.

up from the bridge and stopped side by side. Our leader for this stunt attempt wanted to try something new. We each needed to jump the gap in reverse in order to complete the challenge, but he wanted to up the ante by doing it simultaneously. On the count of three it was pedal to the metal — a cacophony of hoots and hollers reverberating over our headsets — as our pack of daredevils stayed in formation, dodging traffic on our way to the bridge. There was a brief moment of doubt over whether we'd built up enough speed as we hit the upward slope, but it was too late now. We sailed over the gap picture perfect, landing, and then bursting into cheers.

Leap of Faith

"What's next?" asked one of the other drivers.

"This one's almost too nasty," said the other half of the development duo. Scrolling text along the bottom of my screen outlined our new objective: Leap off one of the highest cliffs in the game without totaling your car. I literally had to see this to believe it. Boosting our way across town, we arrived at our destination and I could swear I heard my cohorts grinning. The first two attempts were comical at best as we hit the cliff's edge too slowly or at the wrong angle to pull off the stunt without flattening our rides like pancakes. We eventually nailed it, taking turns idling on the street below to watch one another sail off the edge, more airplane than car. Another challenge mastered.

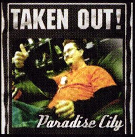
Sand, Surf, and Spirals

It was getting late on the other side of the pond. "Let's end the day on the beach, mates," proposed one of my accomplices. A marker was set, boost was flat out, and we spent the lengthy run to the shore pulling tricks and taking each other down for fun along the way. Driving our dream machines down onto the sand, we saw our final trial. "You two park between those ramps," our aspiring stunt coordinator barked. Side-by-side with fellow stuntsters, we sat idling, adjusting the camera to get the best view of what was about to happen. In order to finish this, we'd each need to take turns jumping over one another's cars while performing and successfully landing a barrel roll. I was first up. I peeled out of formation down the beach, handbraked into a 180, and hit the gas. I hit the specially-designed ramp square-on, executing — in my compatriots' opinions — a perfect corkscrew, landing it and earning a checkmark next to my name indicating that my part of the co-op challenge was a success. The other guys needed a few tries to get it right, but eventually we all succeeded and decided to wrap up the day with some friendly head-on collisions.

Although we only had time to run a few of the forty-plus online co-op challenges, we knew that there was even more — and probably crazier — fun to be had tomorrow, and for the rest of the PS3-owning populous to experience when the game hits in the spring. Randy Nelson

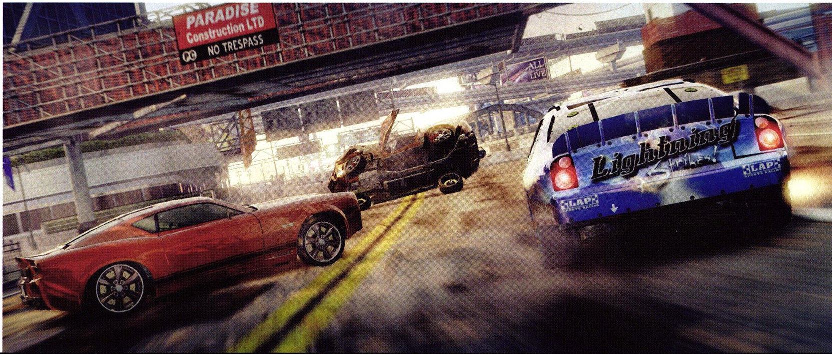
Faces of Near Death

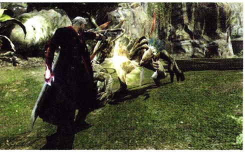
Thanks to the PlayStation Eye camera, we were treated to Takedown "mug shots" of each other every time we wrecked fellow drivers. These photos are saved to the PS3 hard drive and can be shared in-game. The camera will also snap your picture each time you've surpassed a record set by someone on your friends list. These are called "smug shots." Each time your friends start up the game, they'll not only be informed they've been bested, but also see your grinning smug mug adding insult to injury. Here's one of my cool Takedown mug shots from the developer play session.



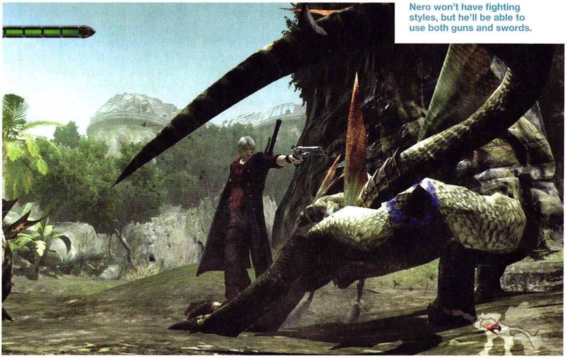
Thumbs-up... of sarcasm.

Avoiding traffic during stunt runs is a challenge in and of itself.





With his shiny Devil Bringer arm, Nero will have lots of new moves.



Nero won't have fighting styles, but he'll be able to use both guns and swords.

Nero's "teammate" of sorts, the sensual Gloria, is also producer Kobayashi's favorite female character.

Devil May Cry 4

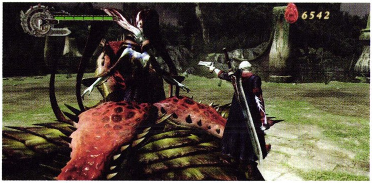
Hands-On Preview

Awesome new weapons make *DMC* slicker than ever

PS3 AVAILABLE: February 5, 2007 GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Capcom DEVELOPER: Capcom

As previous *Devil May Cry* renditions have proved, it's not about the winning… it's about winning with style. It's being a total badass and kicking demon butt. From our hands-on experience with *Devil May Cry 4*, we can attest that this tradition is not only being maintained, but — with the introduction of some new features — it's being pushed further than ever.

While Dante still features prominently in *DMC4* (you'll use him for about forty percent of the game), this new game's protagonist is series newcomer Nero. Nero doesn't use Dante's fighting styles that you might be used to; instead, he possesses the Devil Bringer, a demonic arm that performs context-specific actions. To reach a high ledge, for example, the Devil Bringer works as a grappling hook. In combat, Nero can use the Devil Bringer defensively to lift enemies and hold them a few feet in front of him as a shield. We've also seen the Devil Bringer emerge as a howling demon, trying to crawl out of Nero's back, most likely in conjunction with some offensive combo maneuvers.

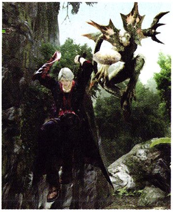


Both Dante and Nero will have to fight this forest snake-woman.

Dante's fighting format has been improved since his last outing in *DMC3*. Instead of choosing one of four styles (Trickster, Gunslinger, Swordmaster, or Royal Guard) before each mission begins, you'll now be able to switch between stances on the fly, leading to some pretty wicked combos. Dante will also have three new sub-weapons. The first, Gilgamesh, is a pair of glove-like plates on Dante's arms. With them, he can slam a fist into the ground to stun nearby enemies. The next, Lucifer, can best be described as Cupid's sadistic arrows… Dante will be able to shoot red spikes into the air, which hover as if frozen. If the spikes pierce an enemy, or even if enemies are just nearby, you can press a button to detonate the spikes and they'll explode. It takes timing, but the payoff is immensely satisfying.

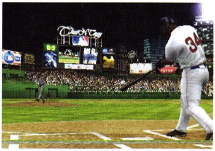
The third sub-weapon, called Pandora, is by far the most awesome. It has around half a dozen forms, from a Gatling gun to an over-the-shoulder cannon to a laser. One form unfolds the box into a sphere around Dante, with rocket launchers lined around its equator. You can also fling a "suitcase" form of the weapon that's like a boomerang on crack. To remain true to its namesake, Pandora's ultimate form is a box that you place on the ground. When opened, it emits a light that instantly kills enemies caught in its glow.

We still don't know much about *DMC4*'s story, but we expect Dante's role to be a little more… mysterious. We also know that Nero and Dante will be traversing some of the same territory and encountering some of the same bosses, though we weren't told why. In any case, we are very impatient for February. Teresa Dun



The stylized action we saw in our hands-on meeting left us drooling for more.

Majestic
NEVER LOSE SIGHT
MLB



On PSP (shown) and PS3, any music stored on memory stick or hard drive can be customized into your own musical playlist.

Need a break? In-game saves are finally supported on both PS3 and PSP (but not PS2).

MLB 08:

The Show

First Look Preview

Our PS3 office obsession gets its own new and improved juice

PS3 PS2 PSP AVAILABLE: Spring 08 GENRE: Sports PUBLISHER: SCEA DEVELOPER: SCEA San Diego

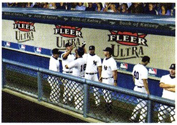
"Deadlines be damned." "We all need mental health breaks." That was our excuse time and time and time again as *MLB '07: The Show* was fired up for heated rivalries. What are you going to do when your boss walks by and swings the invisible bat in the non-verbal call to 'play ball'? Our office baseball fans are purists, favoring real world stats and realistic situations. As such, *The Show*'s excellent pitcher-batter interface spoke perfectly to our hopes for baseball simulation. For '08, as is the case with yearly sports franchises, the improvements are iterative, many under the hood, and still we can't wait to get our hands on the season's next office addiction.

Visually, *MLB '08* will showcase some fairly significant changes. According to producer Jason Villa, one of the top goals for the team is to upgrade the lighting effects, improving the shadowing on the field. The aim is even more visual realism, and that's enhanced by the addition of over 500 new gameplay animations, and that's not including the 1,000-plus custom player stances and animations. "It's amazing how many players change their stances, tweak their deliveries," adds senior designer Eddie Cramm.

The attention to detail goes so far as accurately rendering how a pitcher grips the ball, animating the various pitches, and ensuring fingers are on the seams correctly. Within the stadium, crowds will bat beach balls around, and will animate towards foul balls as the digital spectators scramble for their virtual keepsake. The team has even researched where fans in each stadium hang their K signs for star pitchers (but no hanging chickens for Barry Bonds' walks in San Francisco since the *MLB* license doesn't include the home run king, and now federally-charged slugger).

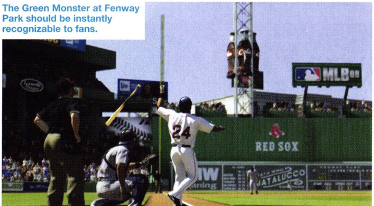
Road to the Show mode, where you play as a minor leaguer in various positions, has received a large number of under-the-hood tweaks. You can now play as a catcher, blocking and throwing out base runners, but not calling pitches. You're also going to need to keep an eye on the new third base coach and learn the signs. He'll be giving you signs, and while you're in the minors you'll get a pop-up explaining what to do, but they'll be gone if you make it to the bigs, so you'll need to know what to look for.

Other features include the replay vault that saves every play of your current game, (and also provides a broadcast-like highlight reel of key moments in the later innings). Online you'll also get real-time scoreboards, and weekly stat updates for every single player. We'll tell you how it plays as soon as we can. Rob Smith



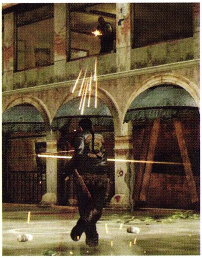
On PlayStation 2 the new game still looks pretty impressive.

The Green Monster at Fenway Park should be instantly recognizable to fans.



PlayStation Gallery

Updates, sneak peeks, work-in-progress



The Club

PS3 AVAILABLE: February 2008
GENRE: Third-person Shooter
PUBLISHER: Sega DEVELOPER: Bizarre Creations

To beef up the game's single-player mechanics, *The Club* will offer four multiplayer modes with eight cozy, maze-like maps. Along with Deathmatch and Team Deathmatch, eight players can partake in a round of Hunter Hunted (all versus one) or Team Skullshot (destroy enemy markers before they destroy yours). Some maps are rather linear, so teams will have to work as a tight, cohesive unit to prevent deadlocks in the middle of the map. RN

Legendary:

The Box

PS3 AVAILABLE: June 2008 GENRE: Shooter
PUBLISHER: Gamecock DEVELOPER: Spark Unlimited

Toss Greek mythology, modern warfare, and secret society conspiracies into a laundry machine, set the cycle to spin, and what you'll get when you pop the lid is a decidedly fresh-smelling *Legendary: The Box*. You'll battle skyscraper-sized golems and regenerating werewolves to the backdrop of a rock and roll soundtrack. A tad contradictory? Absolutely. Are we excited? You bet, but what we're really waiting for is news about the supposedly unusual multiplayer. TD

Turok

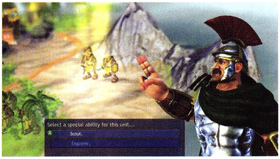
PS3 AVAILABLE: February 5, 2008 GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Touchstone DEVELOPER: Propaganda Games

The bad: *Turok* has been pushed to a February release. The good: we have hands-on proof that the gameplay will be phenomenal. You can shoot a sticky bomb at a dinosaur, use a flare to lure the beast into a den of enemies, and watch the dinosaur go unintentionally kamikaze. Or, you can utilize the Gatling gun's alternate fire — a robotic sentry that automatically fires at enemies — and set it up behind you as a rear guard while you snipe. We're anticipating a sensational return to form for the Native American dino-hunter. TD

Civilization Revolution

PS3 AVAILABLE: Spring 2008
GENRE: Strategy PUBLISHER: 2K Games
DEVELOPER: Firaxis

PC game design legend Sid Meier has set his sights on conquering the console world with *Civilization Revolution*. Built on an extremely deep game engine, the product of years of fine-tuning, the game has been adorned with console-friendly controls and a very vibrant visual design. You'll choose a civilization and take it through multiple eras, deciding who to align with and who to war against in dramatic on-screen skirmishes, all while developing languages, technology, and more to take your people to one of several goals, including launching a space ship destined for Alpha Centauri. RN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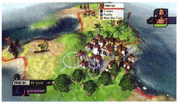
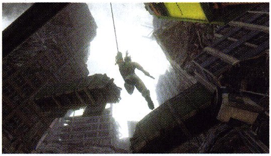
Scout.
Engineer.



Bionic Commando

PS3 AVAILABLE: TBA GENRE: Action
PUBLISHER: Capcom
DEVELOPER: Capcom / GRIN

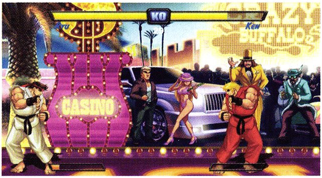


Betrayed and unfairly jailed, Nathan Spencer is sentenced to execution. But when a terrorist faction unleashes a ruinous earthquake, Nathan is the city's only hope for salvation. Why? As fans of the original 8-bit game will recall, Nathan's arm has been technologically modified. In the city's crumbling landscape, Nathan can swing, wall walk, and rappel his way to unraveling the terrorists' plot. The original pitted us against futuristic Nazis and Hitler... will this remake live up to the appeal of its predecessor? TD

Super Street Fighter II
Turbo HD Remix

PS3 AVAILABLE: TBA 2008 GENRE: Fighting
PUBLISHER: Capcom
DEVELOPER: Backbone Entertainment

Street Fighter's hi-def debut comes in the form of a remake, but oh, what a remake it'll be. The same guys who draw the *Street Fighter* comics will create high-resolution 2D art for the game. We won't say more: the art on this page speaks for itself. RN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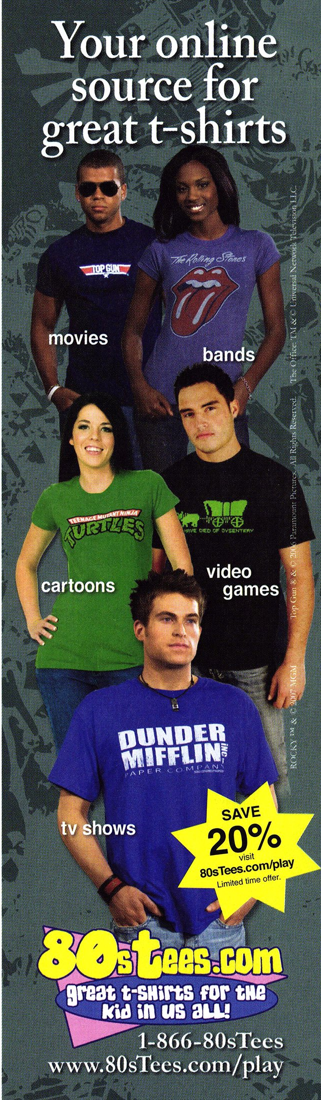
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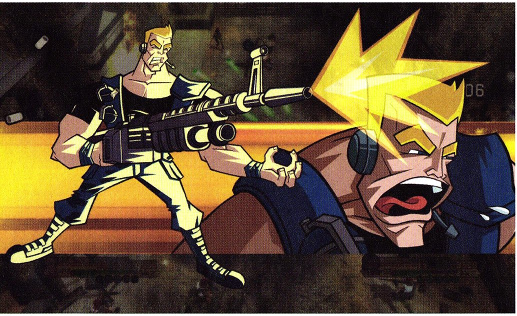
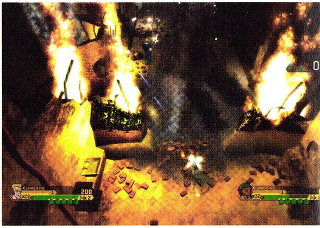
PlayStation Gallery

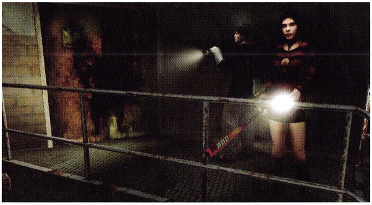


Commando 3

PSN AVAILABLE: Q1 2008 GENRE: Action
PUBLISHER: Capcom
DEVELOPER: Backbone Entertainment

Capcom is going to great lengths to give this retro, vertically-scrolling shoot 'em up a facelift. Step one: freshen up the graphics. Step two: hire Norihiko Hibino (composer for the *Metal Gear* series) to create the soundtrack. Step three: throw in a scoring system and leaderboards. Step four: add in co-op play for up to four people either online or off. Step five: make it available for purchase on the PlayStation Network. The first *Commando* influenced a generation of games, we'll see if *Commando 3* can do the same. TD





Obscure:
The Aftermath

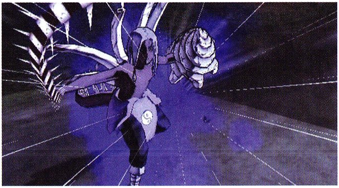
PS2 AVAILABLE: Spring 2008 GENRE: Survival Horror
PUBLISHER: Playlogic
DEVELOPER: Hydravision Entertainment

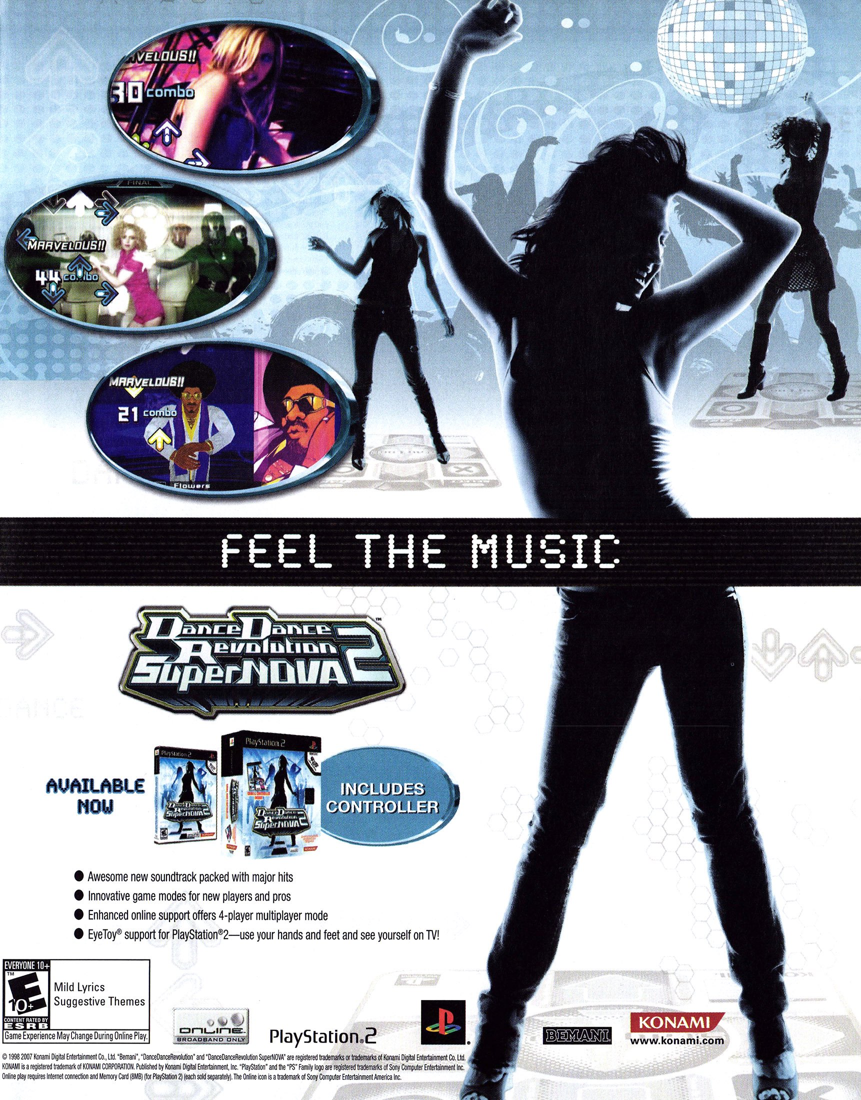
Fans of *Buffy*, *Scream*, and other teen horror survival entertainment should keep *Obscure: The Aftermath* on their radars. The group of high schoolers from the original *Obscure* is back. This time they're high, in college, and trying to crash a frat party when events take a sharp, dark turn. Whether they survive depends on your skill, but luckily, the sequel will feature the game-selling co-op play offered in the original, so you don't have to scream alone. TD

Naruto:
Ultimate Ninja 3

PS2 AVAILABLE: Spring 2008 GENRE: Fighting
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai DEVELOPER: CyberConnect2

You can expect more than just an updated roster — though you will see some new faces (like the First and Second Hokages) — from *Naruto: Ultimate Ninja 3*. This fighting game sequel adds several new features, including Ultimate Contest, a new RPG mode where you explore Hidden Leaf Village, and Hero's History, where you can play through all the events of the anime. The combat's been tweaked a bit, too: you can pick your Jutsus before battles, and, unlike the previous two games, you can actually completely negate damage from special moves if you win the special move button-pressing mini-game. Believe it! TD

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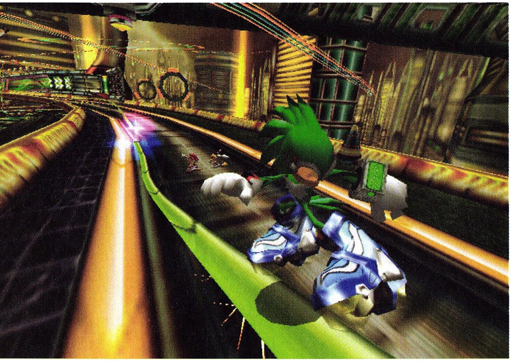
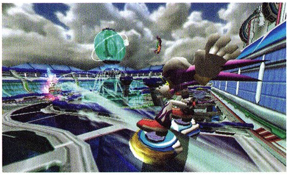
PlayStation Gallery



Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity

PS3 AVAILABLE: February 2008 GENRE: Racing
PUBLISHER: Sega DEVELOPER: Sonic Team

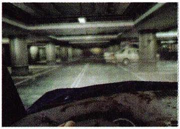
What happens when speedy mechanical baddies invade the planet? Sonic, Tails, and Knuckles must stop them, of course! Using hoverboards and other vehicles, they'll race to each finish line, somehow furthering the plot and outsmarting enemies in the process. They'll have some gravity-defying moves to help them, too, including one that maneuvers them around sharp corners in slow-motion and then flings them forward at high speed. TD



Alone in the Dark

PS2 AVAILABLE: TBA 2008 GENRE: Survival Horror
PUBLISHER: Atari, Inc.
DEVELOPER: Hydravision Entertainment / Eden Studios

The survival horror series that pre-dates even *Resident Evil* is back with its fifth installment, but this time the terror is uncomfortably closer to home — and purposely so. This *Alone in the Dark* will once again feature Edward Carnby battling supernatural forces in New York's own Central Park, and will be released alongside versions for the PS3 and PSP. We're excited to see how fighting ghosts and zombies will feel when they're stalking us on such familiar terrain. TD



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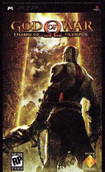
EA SPORTS
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 08


PSP
GOD OF WAR
CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

Coming
Spring '08

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM
RATING PENDING TO MATURE
RP-M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

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SONY
POWER
HOLD
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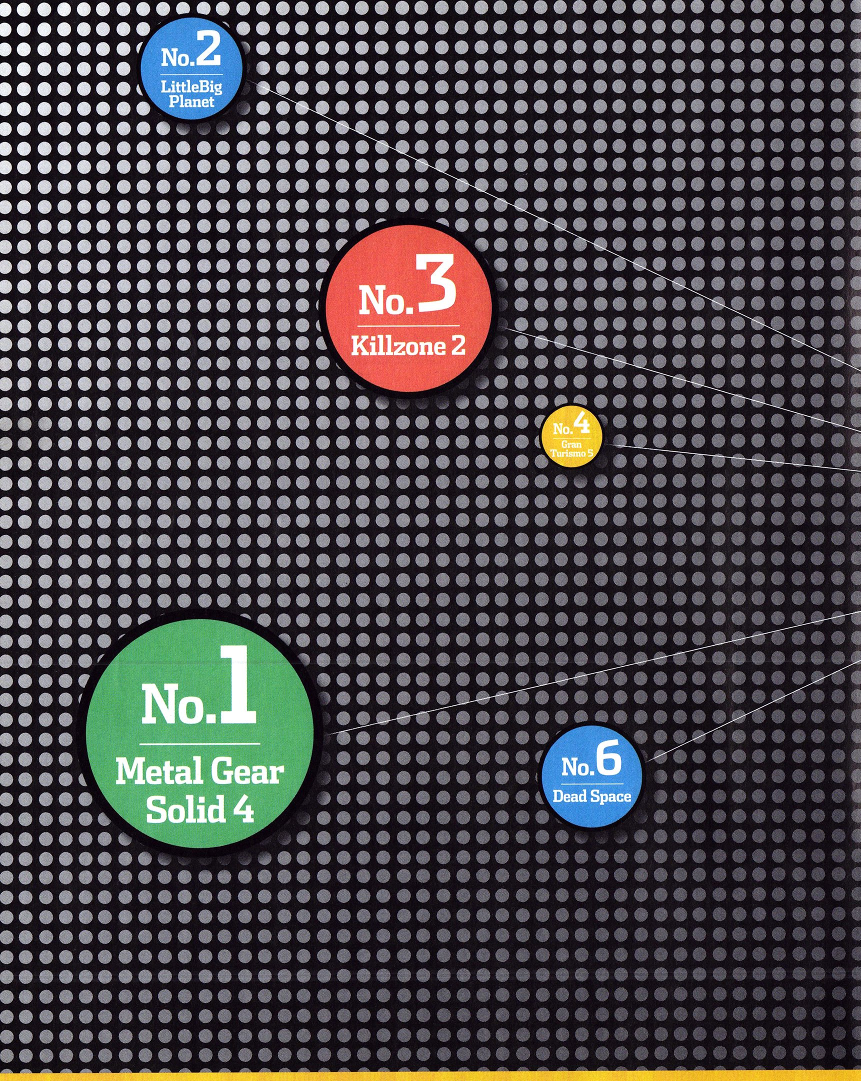
VOL
SELECT
START

PSP
PlayStation Portable


No.2
LittleBig Planet
No.3
Killzone 2
No.4
Gran Turismo 5
No.1
Metal Gear Solid 4
No.6
Dead Space

No. 7
The Agency

No. 5
Fallout 3

[TOP 10 GAMES OF '08]

No. 10
Pro Evolution Soccer

No. 9
GTA IV

No. 8
Ghostbusters

No. 1

Metal Gear Solid 4

Guns of the Patriots

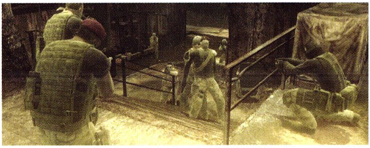
Hands-on with the "officially endorsed" biggest game of 2008

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: Spring 2008
GENRE: Stealth
PUBLISHER: Konami
DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions

Horses for Courses

It's clear that Japanese and Western gamers appreciate different gameplay styles. While Kojima himself is responsible for the controls, difficulty, and balance of the game for the Japanese market, Ryan Payton will be tweaking settings for the U.S. That involves manipulating the aiming system since Japanese gamers can be susceptible to motion sickness, and U.S. gamers like their precision aim. The over-the-shoulder view is currently the default, but you can switch on the fly with the square button.



The best ambushes leave no escape route open for the victims.

Even questions posed in *Metal Gear Solid Portable Ops* will be answered in *MGS4*.

All questions answered?

After trailers, teasers, and countless printed column inches and disposable digital coverage you'd think we were all fully apprised of what to expect from *Metal Gear Solid 4*. But be it the cryptic information dance of genius director Hideo Kojima keeping us constantly unbalanced or a simple case of being lost in translation, even some of the franchise's most hardcore fans couldn't definitively put a finger on how *MGS4* would play.

We know how it will look. As a frontline PS3 showstopper, *MGS4* has with every showing elevated itself to the position of bona fide system seller. Enthusiasts still waiting to jump on the PlayStation bandwagon cite *MGS4* as the tipping game. How can you not? Solid Snake, hair flecked grey by time and the accelerated aging of his cloned heritage (see sidebar) is probably the biggest hero on PlayStation (a statement we'll back until the moment Kratos reminds us of his presence with a playful tap from his blade!). Those teasers also introduced series characters that will play a role in this spiritual sequel to *Metal Gear Solid 2*.

As the announced final game in the *Metal Gear* series, associate producer Ryan Payton confirmed to us that the claim that *Guns of the Patriots* would answer *every* unresolved question was absolutely deadly serious. What if *MGS4* is your first *Metal Gear* game? Will this information fly over your head? Possibly, but the presentation should allow you to stay clued into the big picture progress. For series veterans, when a past scene is conjured in the story, you can hold down a button to view a quick scene from the original game. So when you hear about Metal Gear Rex, you'll have access to a flashback that plays from the earlier *MG* game to provide background to your current situation. You should be prepared to sit back and watch the action unfold in several areas, as the cinematic cutscenes are currently estimated at running a full four hours, "it's definitely more than *MGS3*," Payton confirmed.

Hands-on playtest. Oh. Yes.

Making progress is a big deal for *MGS4*. For the first time, you'll be pointed to your current mission objective on-screen. In part that's a response to the vast world being potentially unwieldy as you manage so many skills, moves, and even remote mechanical devices. Your Octocamo suit lets you blend into any surface. It's completely seamless as you control Snake's movement, ducking behind cover, and blending to a patterned tile finish.

Metal Gear for Noobs

What's a metal gear? Something you find in Big Ben? A bad stick shift? It's quite alright not to know your Liquid Ocelot from your CQC [these names and acronyms are unrelated, and you should understand that by the end of this primer] so step right up for the layman's who, when, and "What?!" of the world of *Metal Gear Solid*.

Hide and Seek

Stealth gameplay has infiltrated videogames of all stripes and it all started with *Metal Gear* on the MSX2 system in 1987. You controlled the pixilated hero Solid Snake in top-down 2D, hiding behind obstacles. *Metal Gear 2* refined the formula; Snake crawled, knocked, and even hang glided into hostile territory.

The 1998 release of *Metal Gear Solid* on PlayStation brought the stealth gameplay into full 3D. The camera swiveled to limit the field of vision when Snake pressed against a wall to hide, and you peeped through cutout handles when hiding under a cardboard box.

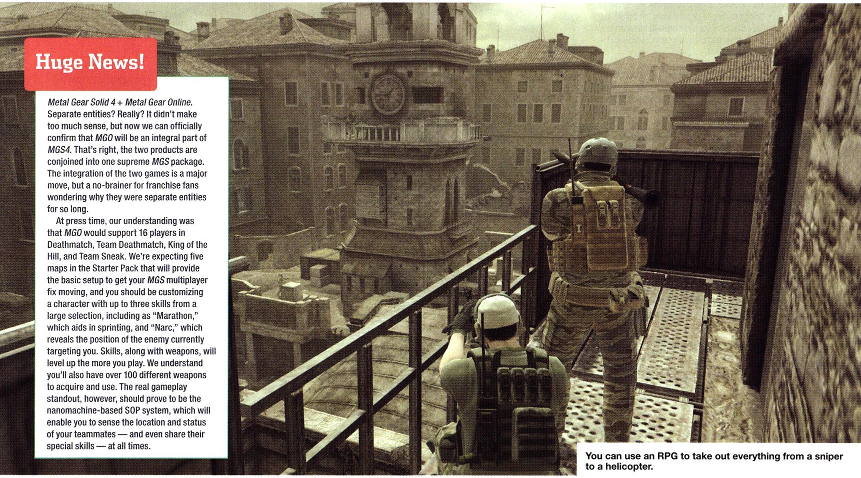
***MGS2* on PlayStation 2 evolved the formula by making stealth offensive as well as defensive: Snake packed a handgun that fired sleep darts so enemies wouldn't discover dead bodies. The games have since rewarded players for sparing enemy lives. *Metal Gear*'s stealth is about more than avoiding enemies; it's about leaving everyone alive when you leave, even the bad guys.**

***MGS3* boasted better stealth gameplay with a new camouflage system and a devastating martial art called CQC (close-quarters combat).**

Huge News!

Metal Gear Solid 4 + Metal Gear Online. Separate entities? Really? It didn't make too much sense, but now we can officially confirm that *MGO* will be an integral part of *MGS4*. That's right, the two products are conjoined into one supreme *MGS* package. The integration of the two games is a major move, but a no-brainer for franchise fans wondering why they were separate entities for so long.

At press time, our understanding was that *MGO* would support 16 players in Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, King of the Hill, and Team Sneak. We're expecting five maps in the Starter Pack that will provide the basic setup to get your *MGS* multiplayer fix moving, and you should be customizing a character with up to three skills from a large selection, including as "Marathon," which aids in sprinting, and "Narc," which reveals the position of the enemy currently targeting you. Skills, along with weapons, will level up the more you play. We understand you'll also have over 100 different weapons to acquire and use. The real gameplay standout, however, should prove to be the nanomachine-based SOP system, which will enable you to sense the location and status of your teammates — and even share their special skills — at all times.



You can use an RPG to take out everything from a sniper to a helicopter.

While Kojima is director of *MGS4*, his role as studio head also involves attending HR meetings that "he hates going to, according to Payton."

Metal Gear for Noobs

Who's Who in MGS

Rather than unravel the conspiracies of the plot, let's look at the characters whose stories will finally be concluded in *MGS4*.

Metal Gear: The ultimate doomsday machine. Bipedal walking tank. Can launch nuclear attacks from anywhere on earth. Has evolved from *MGS3*'s Shagohod to the Gekkos of *MGS4*.

Big Boss: Considered the greatest soldier of the 20th century. Twice saved the world under the codename "Naked Snake." Established the special ops unit FOX-HOUND. Later used Metal Gear and his mercenary state, Outer Heaven, to threaten the world with nuclear war. Father of Solid and Liquid Snake.

Solid Snake: Defeated Big Boss at Outer Heaven and killed him at Zanzibarland. Killed his twin brother Liquid Snake in Alaska. Destroyed multiple Metal Gears, and co-leads the anti-Metal Gear organization Philanthropy. Cloned from Big Boss's genes, and suffers from accelerated aging as a side effect.

Otacon: Real name: Hal Emmerich. Engineer who built Liquid Snake's Metal Gear Rex. Formed Philanthropy with Solid Snake to destroy the death machine that he created. Provides tactical support to Solid Snake.

Ocelot: The series' most mysterious figure. Appears in league with the shadow organization called "the Patriots." Instigated the Metal Gear incident in Alaska. Lost his arm during that incident. Used Liquid's arm as a replacement, which occasionally possesses him with Liquid's personality. Now known as "Liquid-Ocelot."

Liquid Snake: Solid Snake's dark twin. Mentored by Big Boss. Wants to rebuild Outer Heaven and make a world where soldiers are always needed. Killed by a genetic virus, but appears to have taken over Ocelot's body when *MGS4* occurs.

Roy Campbell: Befriended Big Boss early in his military career. Led FOX-HOUND after Snake defeated Big Boss at Outer Heaven. Protected his daughter, Meryl, by lying to Snake during his Alaska mission. Asks Snake to assassinate Liquid-Ocelot in *MGS4*.

Meryl: Roy Campbell's daughter. An avid fan of Solid Snake. Worked with Solid Snake to defeat Liquid. Later pursued a failed romantic relationship with Solid Snake. Returns in *MGS4* as FOX-HOUND's new leader.

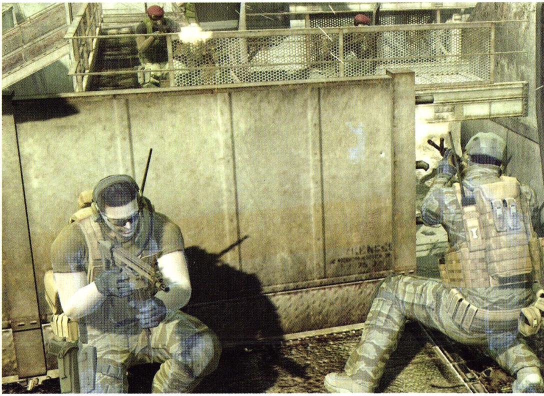
Raiden: Real name: Jack. Former Liberian child soldier. Brainwashed by the Patriots through VR training to fight like Solid Snake. Used as a guinea pig to test the Patriots' plan for societal control. Decided to leave the battlefield and settle down with his fiancée and their child, but apparently failed. Appears in *MGS4* as a cyborg ninja.

Vamp: Former member of the terrorist group Dead Cell. Apparently immortal. Has survived gunshots to his face, drowning, and impalement. Seems to be Raiden's nemesis in *MGS4*.

Some 300 surface textures ensure that Snake's suit will be well stocked with chameleon abilities come the conclusion of the game. (While Ryan Payton's job as Associate Producer sounds awesome, filled with critical gameplay responsibility, he also has to name all 300 surface textures individually since once stored in the Octocamo they can be called on for whatever situation you're in to provide critical cover.)

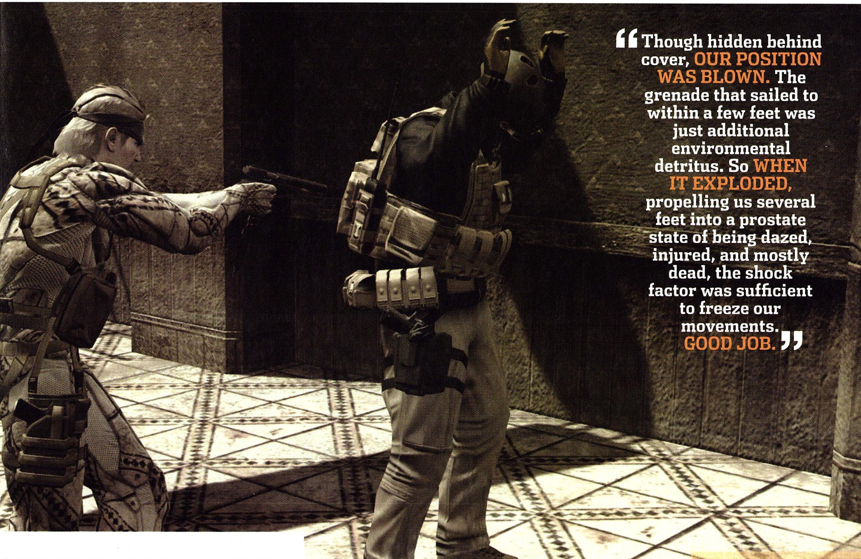
During our playtest we faced off against several enemies. They flanked, sought cover, and frankly provided the kind of challenge that gamers may well appreciate for its realism, but required an all-new level of awareness from us to be effective in tight situations. But then the moment occurred that sold us beyond any trailer, PR spiel, or even past familiarity could deliver.

Though hidden behind cover, our position was blown. The grenade that sailed to within a few feet was just additional environmental detritus. So when it exploded, propelling us several feet into a prostate state of being dazed, injured, and mostly dead, the shock factor was sufficient to freeze our movements. Good job. If we'd flicked the analog stick just a smidge we'd have alerted the approaching guards that our feigned death state was more feign than death. Our breath held as tight as our lungs would allow, the guards approached, and spotting our prone body, crouched and swiped a hand over this apparent mass of worm fodder. It was magic. Confirming to their superiors that the threat was neutralized, we



Using cover successfully will keep you breathing... and fighting alongside your team mates in *Metal Gear Online*.

At TGS, players had 30 rations to help survival. It was down to ten by the play test at the E for All event, and will probably land at just three (to begin with) for ship.



Capturing enemy soldiers can be more valuable than killing them.

> “Though hidden behind cover, **OUR POSITION WAS BLOWN.** The grenade that sailed to within a few feet was just additional environmental detritus. So **WHEN IT EXPLODED,** propelling us several feet into a prostate state of being dazed, injured, and mostly dead, the shock factor was sufficient to freeze our movements. **GOOD JOB.**”

could then jump behind cover, and plan some major payback.

Seriously, we dare you to move in that situation. It was intense, stylish, and utterly realistic as animations kicked in that we didn't even imagine existed. With 200 staffers on the project, it's absolutely evident where the work of the thirty animators was well utilized.

Ready for launch

Payton had to rerecord a few lines of dialogue to direct players on how to deal with certain challenges. An armored Striker comes into view, and so many gamers at Tokyo Game Show started lobbing grenades at it that it was clear better messaging was needed for Snake to know that this tactic wouldn't work. But such is the complexity of *MGS4*'s gameplay that we're not surprised it has required additional time to be readied to perfection. Just jumping into the game world, meeting with the PMC allies that you can fight alongside, trading weapons with them to ensure the good guys are always as well stocked as possible, is a deep, intense experience.

We're waiting for all those questions to be answered. And as we wait we can tell you that *MGS4* plays with such amazing acuity that the addition of *MGO* to the main product is merely icing on a cake that's cooking in the hands of such talented chefs that we have no doubt their talents will shine come release day. No doubt, no question, no argument: *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* (even before the *Metal Gear Online* addition) was our top choice for “must have” of 2008, and the integration of the online element simply serves to enhance that position. Pre-order. Now.

LittleBigPlanet

Simple beauty; beautifully simple.

How far can you stretch your brain? What creativity lurks in an untapped clump of gray matter, waiting for stimulation to wrest it from its slumber? *LittleBigPlanet* will be PS3's method of tapping that resource. You've seen the colorful, stylish characters; you've probably seen the puzzle-solving co-operative gameplay; and you may have seen hints of the user customization. But honestly, this facet of the game is so deep, so immense, that it's clear the surface has been merely scratched.

Clothing your cute character is simple enough. Crafting entire levels for you and your friends to explore and chase through is also simple on the surface, but the sheer volume of options will ensure your first foray into level design will just get you hooked. At this past year's E3, to demonstrate the flexibility and power of the level and object design tools, the studio heads tasked team members with creating unique objects or settings in just one hour. The results were sensational. Wildly original, thoroughly inventive, and fun to see and play. In one hour. Sure, so they're probably pretty adept with the tools, and you might take a little longer to get to that level, but the important factor is the breadth and depth of flexibility these tools allow.

From complex mathematical puzzles to rolling dragon-like creatures, it was clear that the drag-and-drop mechanics not only provided all the functionality to craft your own unique creations, but the interface was nimble enough to make these design decisions malleable even in novice hands.

Frankly, we dread to consider what will happen to the practical magazine workflow when *LittleBigPlanet* finally arrives on our PS3s. It's hard enough to meet deadlines without having the distraction of trying to be the smartest, funniest, or weirdest designer of new objects, puzzles, or attire for the game. But we know it's coming. And if all that creativity isn't enough, hold down the left trigger, flick the left analog stick to the side, and you can smack the character next to you! See? Simple though it appears, *LittleBigPlanet* might just have everything we need in a game.

No.2
LittleBigPlanet

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE:
Spring 2008

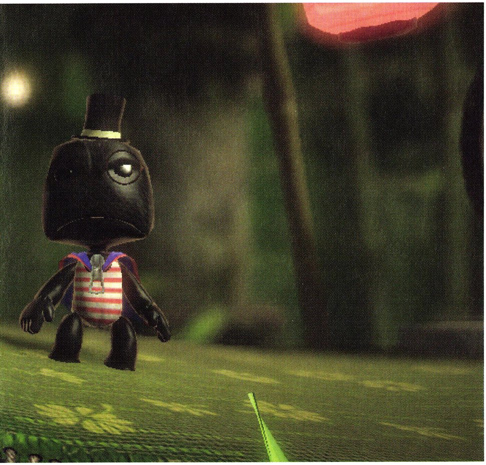
GENRE: Puzzle

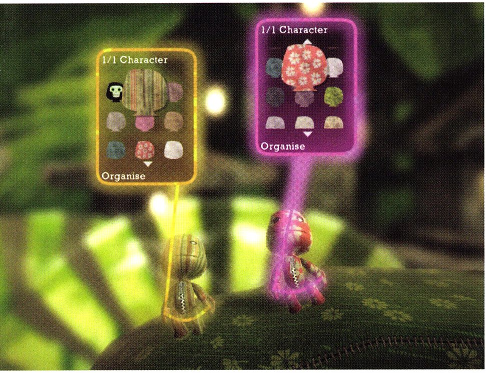
PUBLISHER:
SCEA

DEVELOPER:
Media Molecule

Pop-up windows attached to your character let you quickly select new skins , as well as any clothing or headwear from a huge initial selection. Level and puzzle design is a more complicated affair as you use the sticks to move objects around the screen, being aware of the 3D nature of the apparent 2D screen. But with practice you could be designing like a pro.

Pulling faces, frowning, and smiling is all user-controlled. Various simple flicks of the analog sticks and direction pad will emote whatever you want. The big eyes and wide mouths of your character help convey these emotions clearly, even though they can be relatively small on-screen.



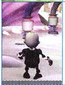


Top Five PSP Games

Just because the PSP has become slimmer doesn't mean it's lost its forcefulness. Here are five meaty titles we're dying to slide into our PSPs in 2008.

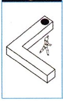
1. Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII
If we need to justify why *Crisis Core* tops this list, then we've lost you already. An action-RPG that takes place in the *FFVII* universe and fills in missing details of Cloud's history, *Crisis Core* is an RPG fan's dream.

2. God of War: Chains of Olympus
Set in the decade before the first *God of War*, *Chains of Olympus* features Kratos' ten years of servitude to the Gods of Olympus. We can't wait to test whether Kratos' transition to the small screen retains the epic quality of the first two games.



3. Secret Agent Clank
We adore Clank for his savvy taste in fashion, clever weaponry, and cute metallic head (the shape is so alluring). An entire game based on the Ratchet duo's less-played half will be a real treat.

4. Patapon
A mixture of *LocoRoco*, real-time strategy, and what we think *LittleBigPlanet* may be like, *Patapon* is actually a rhythm game at heart. Time button presses to the music in order to collect Patapons and attack enemies.



5. echochrome
Like an etch-a-sketch version of M. C. Escher's stairway paintings, *echochrome* is a puzzle game that will stretch the genre to new territories. Rotate the level to change your perspective and follow your shadow-like "echo" to the exit

Top PlayStation Network Games

Don't discount PlayStation Network games simply because they lack the fancy trimmings (like cases and manuals). Upcoming downloads demand your attention as much as any PS3 game.

1. SOCOM: Confrontation
A tactical third-person shooter that will be available online, *SOCOM: Confrontation* will support up to 32 players. You'll be able to either download it from the PlayStation Store or buy it on a Blu-ray disc.

2. Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo HD Remix
Check out page 28 for more info — just know that we're very, very excited to play *Street Fighter* in hi-def.

3. WipEout HD
Gravity-defying combat racing at its very best, *WipEout HD* is bound to be packed with more thrills than ever before, especially now that the series has finally gone hi-def.

No. 3

Killzone 2

Dear Mom and Dad,

Hopefully this will get to you before I get to [redacted]. We're still about two weeks out from Helghan, but [redacted] is making it hard to get messages out to the fleet, let alone our families.

Every time I head down to the drop deck, I can't help but feel a rush of adrenaline at the thought of avenging the countless murders those filthy Helghast committed back on Vekta. To think that our very ranks were infiltrated by treacherous sympathizers… it makes me sick.

Dad — I actually met Jan Templar, the hero of the Vekta assault! He was in the mess hall when I was, but I didn't want to come off as a crazy fan boy, so I didn't talk for too long. I did thank him for you as I promised I would. Seems like a nice enough guy, but you can tell he's seen a lot. The guys have posters of Templar's squad up like they're some kind of champion sports team. Luger the spy! Rico the heavy gunner! Hahka the, well, half-Helghast! I can almost hear the announcer now. Heh. I don't know if we'll have any squads like his down on the surface of Helgan, but there are plenty of troopers on my boat who want to make their names in the assault.

I don't know how much I'm supposed to talk about this, and I don't want to worry you, but the buzz coming down from command is that the Helghast have some nasty tricks up their sleeves. Yesterday I heard they have cannons that draw lightning out of the sky and that they're probably planning [redacted]. There's even talk that they can [redacted]! I was able to catch a glimpse at one of the intel monitors and was amazed at what they were holding back on Vekta. They have these really scary-looking heavies that carry Gatling guns and flame throwers. I plan to stay as far away from those freaks as possible! Oh, right, I said I didn't want to scare you.

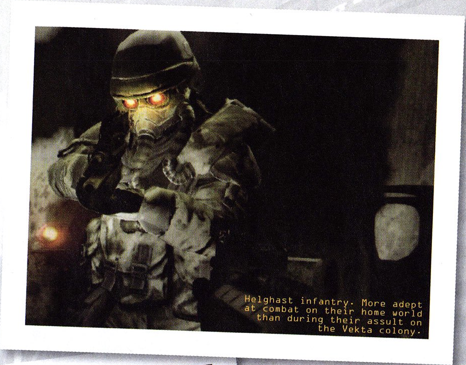
Back to the assault — everyone here is buzzed about hitting the ground, although I'm a little worried about the effects their air [redacted]. Anyway, I should get going. We're having firing drills with some of the new rifles we picked up at the way station at 0800. I love you guys and I know you'll be there waiting for me when my transport docks. We'll have the Helghast wishing they'd never messed with the ISA in no time!

Your Son,

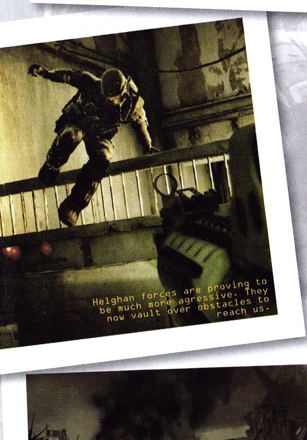
PFC James Christopher
ISA 1st mechanized infantry
I.S.S. Warhawk

ENCRYPTED SUB-SIGNAL DETECTED
BEGIN BLOCK DECRYPTION: KEY 22357

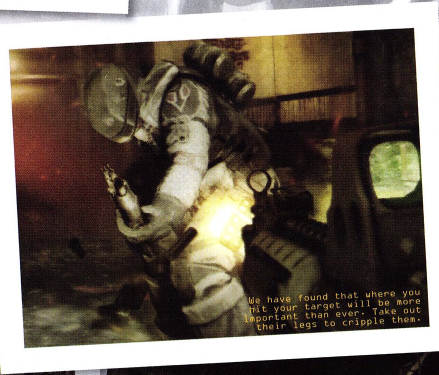
P.S. You really have to see Helghan to believe it! I think you'll get a kick out of some of these old recon photos I… borrowed, dad. They were sent back from one of our advance scout units. My buddy Rick is part of that detachment, but I haven't heard from him since he left. Sure he's fine, right? Brass told us the mission was a "complete success." Enjoy! Oh, and don't worry about me getting in trouble for these — I made sure to encrypt them the way you taught me. Like father, like son, eh?



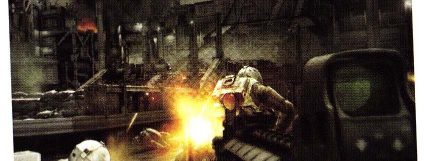
Helghast infantry. More adept at combat on their home world than during their assult on the Vekta colony.



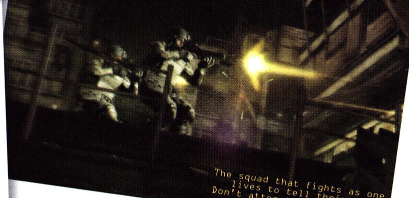
Helghan forces are proving to be much more agressive. They now vault over obstacles to reach us.



We have found that where you hit your target will be more important than ever. Take out their legs to cripple them.



Helghan's atmosphere is a violent stew of chemicals and electrical storms.



The squad that fights as one lives to tell their tale. Don't attempt to take on the Helghast alone.

Gran Turismo 5

The fascinating facts and stats of the celebrated franchise

No.4 Gran Turismo 5

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: 2008	
GENRE: Racing	
PUBLISHER: Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.	
DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital, Inc.	

Gran Turismo 5 Fact Review

In case you've forgotten the essentials, here's a handy list of what new features you can expect in *GT5*:

- New vehicles, including the awesome Nissan GT-R and some Ferraris, including the F430
- High definition (1080p-60fps during races, 1080p-30fps during replay)
- 16-player multiplayer
- Introduction of *Gran Turismo* TV, which lets you download car-related TV programming (including clips from the fantastic British car show, *Top Gear*)
- Four driving views, including the new in-cockpit view with customized dashboards
- Photo Mode, which lets you shoot your car during races and add in effects like zoom and motion blur
- My Garage: a profile page with a friends list, personal game records, and chat functionality

Gran Turismo for Your Ears

You'll find *Gran Turismo* referenced in "The Irony of It All" by The Streets in their *Original Pirate Material* album, and "My Console" by Eiffel 65 in their *Europop* album (as your own little mini-challenge: see how many PlayStation titles you can recognize in that song).

Pop Culture Quiz

What do *The King of Queens*, *Stargate SG-1*, and *The Fast and the Furious* have in common? That's right, they all feature characters playing *Gran Turismo*. You'll see Doug racing on Tahiti Maze, Lt. Colonel Jack O'Neill (well, his clone) playing *Gran Turismo 3*, and a PlayStation mounted in a car while someone drives on the High Speed Ring circuit.

Transcending the Medium

Think videogames are just for entertainment? Think again. We have *Gran Turismo* to thank for some drool-worthy cars like the Nissan Skyline, the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution series, and the Subaru Impreza WRX being brought to the United States. Originally, they were only available in right-hand-drive markets. *Gran Turismo* has also increased awareness of companies like Alfa Romeo, Ruf, Venturi, and Aston Martin.

It's All About Details

The polygon count per car for *Gran Turismo 4* was a mere 5,000 per vehicle. In *Gran Turismo 5*, each car will be pampered with a whopping 200,000 polygons! Talk about detail!

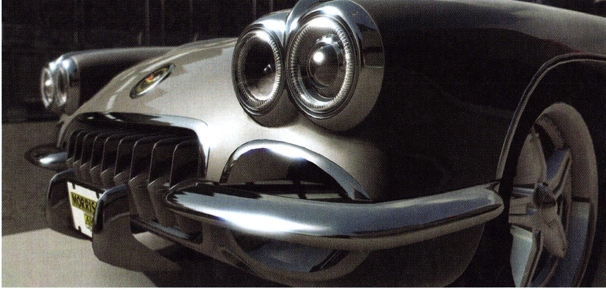
"That's not really a racing car, that's just pornography."

Says Jeremy Clarkson from *Top Gear*, who first beat the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in a Honda NSX in *GT4* with a lap time of 1:42. He then attempted to match his score driving a real Nissan NSX at the real racetrack. His conclusion? It's just not the same. Check it out. Look up "Top Gear: *GT4* vs Reality" on YouTube to see the clip for yourself.

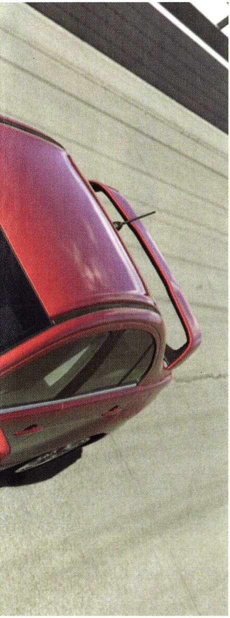
Lovebirds?

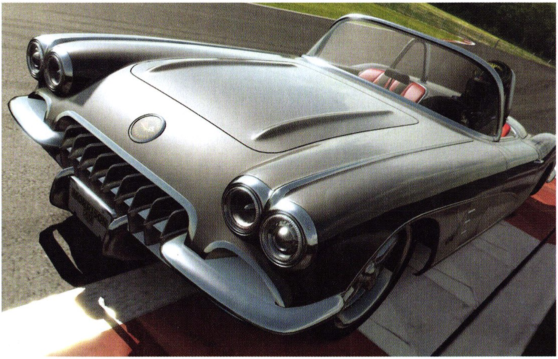
The band The Cardigans adore *Gran Turismo*. That's why they named one of their albums after the franchise and wrote a song dedicated to the game, called My Favourite Game. It's also why you'll hear a remix of the song in the opening and closing movies of the PAL and U.S. versions of *Gran Turismo 2*.

The 1960 Corvette is a collector's classic.



Mitsubishi's Evolution X was designed using the technology gleaned from 26 years of World Rally Championship participation.





The sleek lines of the Corvette were made for speed.

Production models of the Evolution X will hit dealers in early 2008.

By the Numbers

The *Gran Turismo* franchise has shipped more than 47 million units, worldwide. Here's the breakdown:

North American sales: 17.77 million

Gran Turismo: 3.99 million

Gran Turismo 2: 3.96 million

Gran Turismo 3: 7.12 million

Gran Turismo 4: 5.69 million

Worldwide sales: 47.22 million

Gran Turismo: 10.85 million

Gran Turismo 2: 9.37 million

Gran Turismo 3: 14.87 million

Gran Turismo 4: 9.21 million

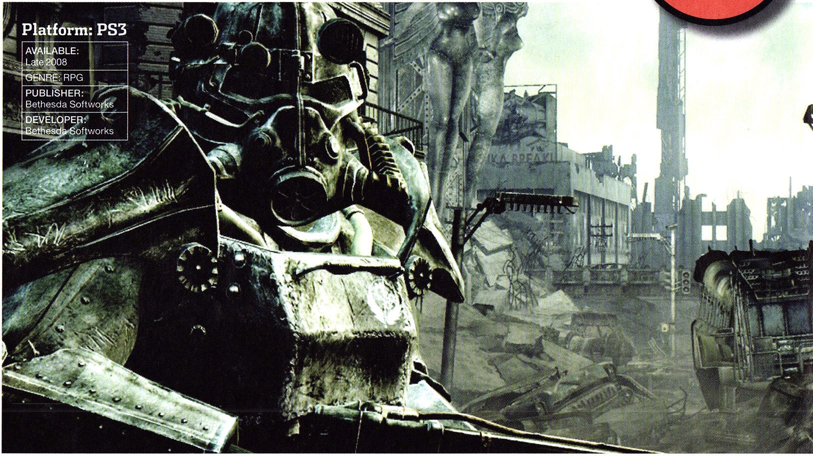
Any bets on how well *GT5* will sell? Hint: the beauty of these screenshots ought to give a clue.

Source: SCEA

Fallout 3

Once upon a time *Fallout 3*'s lead designer worked on the games press side as Editor-in-Chief of the popular web site, Adrenaline Vault. Since then Emil Pagliarulo has designed some critically acclaimed games and brings that experience to this latest epic-in-the-making.

No. 5
Fallout 3



Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: Late 2008
GENRE: RPG
PUBLISHER: Bethesda Softworks
DEVELOPER: Bethesda Softworks

Out in the wasteland of a nuked Eastern seaboard you have to be careful who you talk to, and how.

PTOM: For a PlayStation audience whose only contact with the *Fallout* franchise might be *Brotherhood of Steel,* what is *Fallout,* in a nutshell?

EP: *Fallout*, as a franchise, is all about finding your way in an open-ended, post-apocalyptic world. There's good, there's evil, and there's everything in between. So for the player, it's all about doing what you want, how you want. There's always a greater good, a sense of nobility and selfless purpose that you can champion… if you want. If you wander through the rubble and be a complete ass, well, you can do that too!

Fallout is also different from other post-apocalyptic settings in that the America that got destroyed wasn't our America, not as we know it today. It was the year 2077, and the country had developed into much more of a 1950's version of the future. You know, the "World of Tomorrow" ideal. Women with beehive haircuts were driving around with their robots in nuclear-powered cars — and then they all blew up.

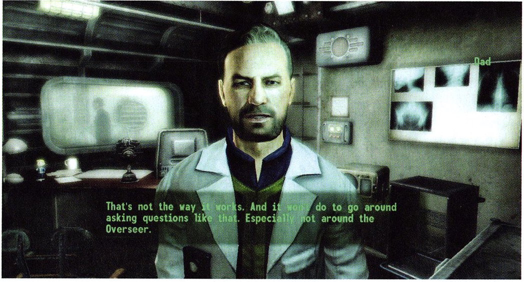
PTOM: Your resume includes the *Thief* series and *Oblivion* (particularly Dark Brotherhood quests), so you like the sneak-and-stab style of gameplay?

EP: I love the subtlety of that type of gameplay, taking a break from the frenetic action to approach a scenario more methodically. So yeah, playing the sneaking, back-stabbing type of character is very possible in *Fallout 3*. In fact, there's a particular stealth tactic made infamous in the previous *Fallout* games, and we're really psyched to have that in *Fallout 3*. I'll give you a hint — it involves pockets and explosives.

Ah, and there are a couple of new Perks (special abilities you choose when leveling up) I think stealth-loving players are going to really enjoy…

In the wasteland it's okay, in fact highly recommended, to take firearms into a school.

EARLY DAWN
EL ME T RY



That's not the way it works. And it won't do to go around asking questions like that. Especially not around the Overseer.

Rounding out *Fallout 3*'s style is voice acting from Hollywood stars including Liam Neeson, who stars as your father.

This isn't a scene from *Scanners.* That used to be a face... just seconds ago, in fact.

PTOM: Given your experience with open-world game designs, what is the extra firepower of next-gen technology allowing you to do for gameplay, above and beyond the obvious graphical enhancements?

EP: Great question. I'll admit I've become much more of a graphics whore than I used to be, but I'll still take rich gameplay experiences and immersion over anisotropic filtering and specular mapping any day. So for me, it's all about using the tech to make the worlds more believable. Shiny graphics help with that, but so does full audio for every character, our Radiant AI system for a full range of character behaviors with full 24/7 schedules, and the ability to make worlds as large as we want. With today's tech, the little sandbox becomes an entire playground. For a game designer, that's a dream come true.

PTOM: What does radioactive mutation do to the denizens in your world?

EP: Well, a lot of the creatures you encounter in *Fallout* also adhere to that "1950's vision of the future," so the radiation has managed to affect even the most mundane animal and insect. Ants, cockroaches, scorpions, even mole rats have grown to giant proportions. The lucky humans that have been exposed to too much radiation drop dead — but sometimes they survive that exposure and become Ghouls. Take some zombie chocolate and dip it into the leper peanut butter, and you've got a Ghoul. They're hideous to look at, but human underneath. At least, some of them.

But even those people and animals that haven't been mutated by radiation (or something else) are affected by the harsh world around them. You know, there are sadistic human Raiders who'll hunt you for sport, or wild dogs looking for their next meal that will rip you to pieces. Outside of the established settlements, the Capital Wasteland is a pretty inhospitable place.

PTOM: How many creature designs did you produce for the bestiary? Any particularly dumb ideas that are worth recounting for comedy value?

EP: You know, honestly, it really wasn't like that. We had such a great roster of baddies to draw from already; the selection process was actually pretty smooth. So we've got a lot of existing *Fallout* creatures, from the vicious Deathclaws to the brutish Super Mutants. For those classics, our job is making sure we do them justice, making sure we bring them to life on next-gen platforms in ways that are consistent and respectful to the source material. And anytime we've created a new creature, we've been bound by the same principles. Does this fit into *Fallout*? Does this match the vibe of our unique world?

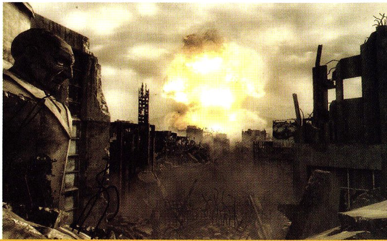
PTOM: Have you written the funniest gag or line of dialogue in the game yet?

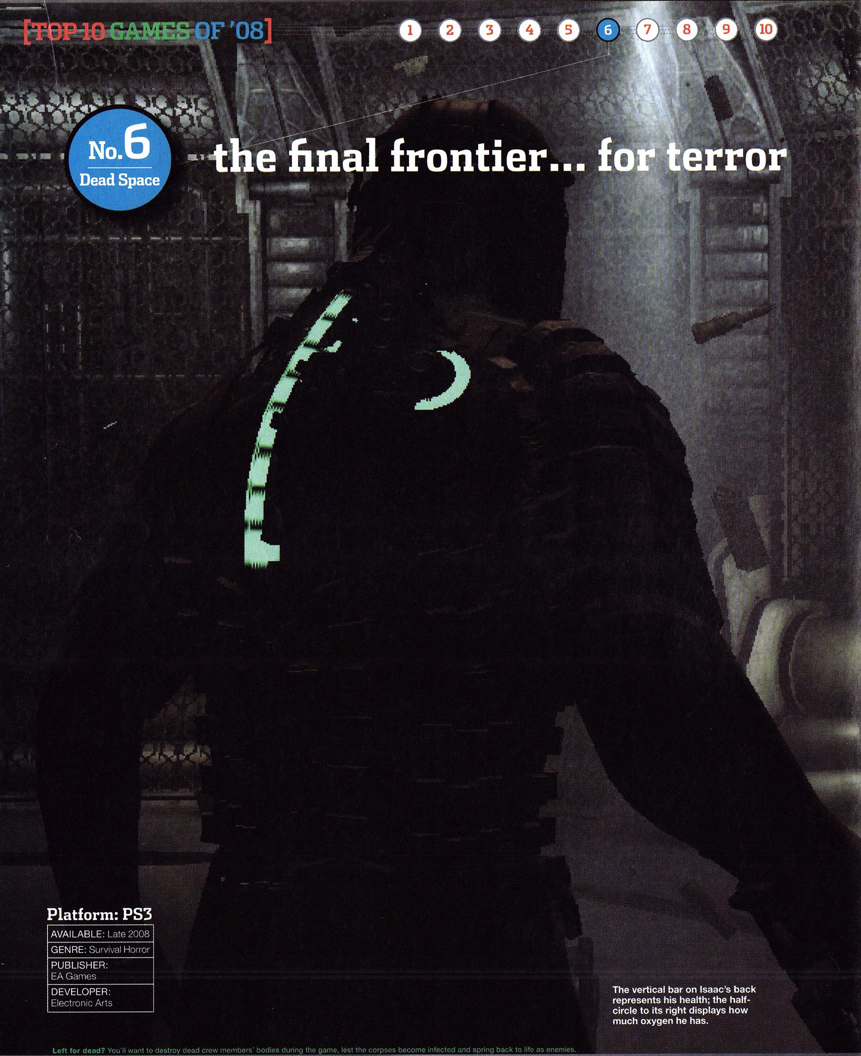
EP: Wow, funny you should ask that! I just wrote some combat dialogue for a particular character, and I just love his flavor. You know, sometimes you just feel like you nail a character's voice, and this was one of those occasions. Of course, I always think my stuff is brilliantly funny, and someone usually proves me wrong. But in this case, I'm right! I hope.

PTOM: How are you finding developing on the PlayStation 3?

EP: *Oblivion*'s a huge game, certainly not easy to create, but we did it. So we've got experience on the platform now. For us, releasing a game on PS3 the same day as the 360 and PC versions means we get to draw even more people into our world.

That explosion? You have a say over whether that happens or it doesn't, and it affects the rest of the game. Given the choice, will you press the button?





No.6
Dead Space

the final frontier... for terror

Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: Late 2008
GENRE: Survival Horror
PUBLISHER: EA Games
DEVELOPER: Electronic Arts

The vertical bar on Isaac's back represents his health; the half-circle to its right displays how much oxygen he has.

Left for dead? You'll want to destroy dead crew members' bodies during the game, lest the corpses become infected and spring back to life as enemies.

Just over a year ago, a small team within Electronic Arts comprised of former *Lord of the Rings*, *James Bond*, and *Knockout Kings* development staff set to work on a new project — totally original, not a licensed property, and... not yet green-lit by their bosses. Titled *Dead Space*, it's the team's first foray into the survival horror genre, but to experience it, you wouldn't know it.

"It was a perfect storm, if you will, of the team having a passionate idea and EA embracing original properties," recounts executive producer Glen Schofield about the game's atypical development kickoff. "We came to [management] with the idea and the enthusiasm and they said 'Let's do it.' We went off for about six months and just built and designed a small section of the game. We didn't come back with a design doc, we came to them with a playable 15 minutes.

"Our game plan from day one was to build it and put it in people's hands. We kept polishing our mechanics and main character until we felt it was ready to show. When we were satisfied, we showed it to the execs. It got the green light that day."

Unlikely Setting, Less Likely Hero

"There really haven't been many sci-fi themed survival horror games," says Schofield. Up until now, they've largely been rooted in supernatural and zombie lore. For *Dead Space*, you're not cast as a gun-toting hero onboard a space station, zapping aliens that might as well be undead humans. No, as Schofield puts it, "This will not be your average survival horror game."

Dead Space places you in the role of an engineer named Isaac, part of a team of technicians sent to investigate lost communications with a "planet cracking" mining starship, the Ishimura. They find it dead in orbit around its target planet, and no life on board... or so they think.

The ship's life support and artificial gravity systems are down, so getting them up and running is top priority. Isaac's spacesuit offers a limited supply of oxygen, which slowly depletes while he is in deactivated sections of the ship. The designers have crafted an elegant method for displaying important information. For example, Isaac's health is represented by a glowing bar built into the spine of his suit. Ammo count and other information is displayed only when needed in the form of holographic projections.

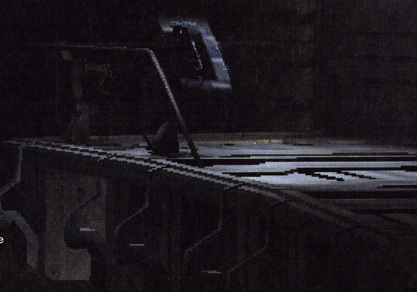
Trudging through the creaking leviathan that is the dormant Ishimura is tense even before initiating combat with the horrible creatures that have overrun it. It's virtually impossible to see what lies ahead until you bring power online. Your hearing becomes an invaluable tool as you listen for any sounds beyond far-off alarms, the ship's computer issuing status reports, and Isaac's own breathing.

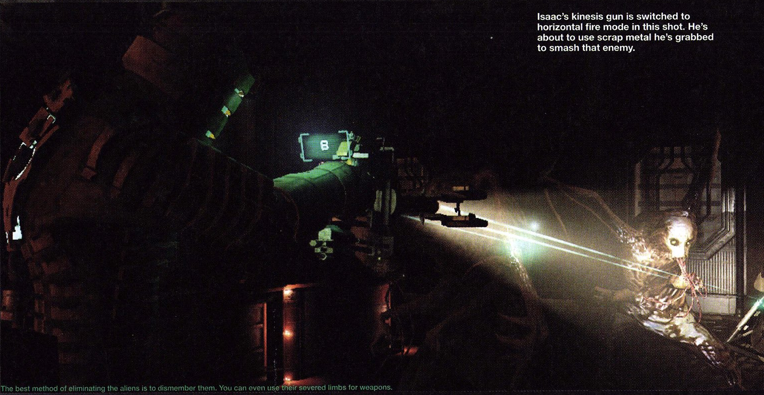
Zero Gravity, Plenty of Fear

"We've spent a lot of time trying different ways to keep the player in a state of tension and suspense. From 'boo moments' to psychological terror to just plain horror," explains Schofield, adding that "the audio, visuals, lighting, and pacing are critical in a game like this."

We were shown the same 15 minute demo that got the game its executive blessing — fine-tuned a bit more, of course — and could instantly tell just how committed Schofield and company are to maintaining a delicate balance of all those elements, while still creating a unique environment. "We have really tried to create a look in the environments, characters, creatures, and even

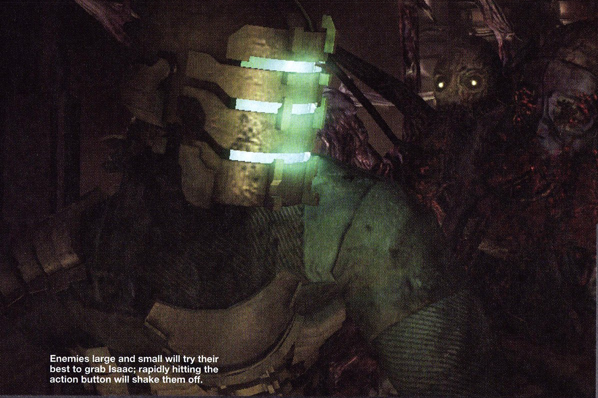
➔



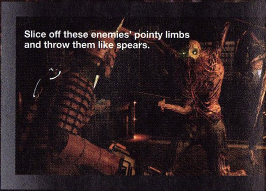


Isaac's kinesis gun is switched to horizontal fire mode in this shot. He's about to use scrap metal he's grabbed to smash that enemy.

Creepy crawlies: The best method of eliminating the aliens is to dismember them. You can even use their severed limbs for weapons.



Enemies large and small will try their best to grab Isaac; rapidly hitting the action button will shake them off.



Slice off these enemies' pointy limbs and throw them like spears.

Isaac's suit that is new and fresh," says Schofield of the visual means the team is using to help *Dead Space* stand out. The differences, however, are far more than cosmetic.

"There's also the extensiveness of dismemberment. We've gone over the top with our use of it! But it's not gratuitous — it's actually the best way to kill an enemy," Schofield says. "Actually, it's about the only way you are going to kill an enemy. Headshots aren't the key to this game; dismemberment in your own style is."

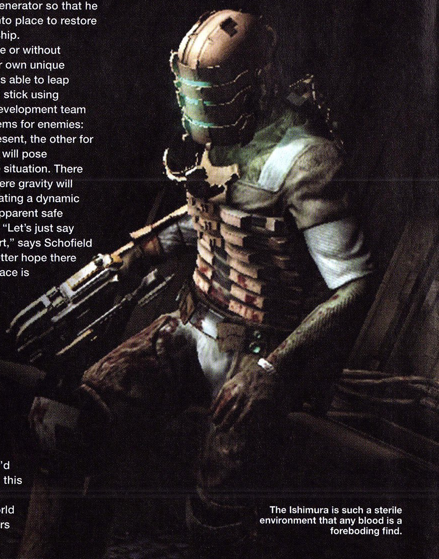
It's important to note that Isaac will only ever have access to a couple of traditional firearms during the game. He utilizes re-purposed mining tools the rest of the time. He can fire them horizontally or vertically, depending on how you'd like to carve up enemies. Fire horizontally and you'll take off a head (if you can call it that), and vertically an arm (ditto). Says Schofield: "Maybe you want to take the legs out first, on another one the arms; either way, the enemies are still lethal. The weapons are created for dismemberment and enemies designed with that in mind. At some point, you'll realize you can use parts of the enemy's body as weapons against it."

This is done with the laser-like kinesis beam that Isaac can also use to lift, pull, and throw other objects, grab items from a distance, or pull platforms towards him. He can also fire a stasis blast at enemies to slow them. Stasis blasts are also useful in puzzle solving. One example we witnessed saw Isaac using the stasis "weapon" to slow the camshaft of a generator so that he could move and lock it into place to restore power to an area of the ship.

Areas exposed to space or without artificial gravity pose their own unique zero-g challenges. Isaac is able to leap towards solid ground and stick using magnetized boots. The development team has created two A.I. systems for enemies: one for when gravity's present, the other for when it's not, so enemies will pose different threats given the situation. There are specific scenarios where gravity will return mid-fight, necessitating a dynamic change of tactics. Even apparent safe locations probably aren't. "Let's just say these guys are really smart," says Schofield of the enemies. "You'd better hope there isn't a vent in there. No place is really safe."

Epic Promise

The events of *Dead Space* occur halfway through a larger storyline that the team has created, partly to deliver a richer experience, and obviously to leave the door open for prequels and sequels. In Schofield's own words: "I'd like to be able to build on this universe… to continue to create and realize this world and scare gamers for years to come." Randy Nelson



The Ishimura is such a sterile environment that any blood is a foreboding find.

Nabbed! One scene shows Isaac being dragged by his feet through the ship's corridors by a massive tentacle. You'll be able to shoot at it to get free while being whipped around like a rag doll.

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UBISOFT

The Agency

No. 7
The Agency

We did it. Insider information was our goal, and that's what we got, courtesy of this secret dossier of intelligence on *The Agency* (with a little inside help from lead designer, Hal Milton). -RS

The Agency

IDENTITIES

The Agency was first simply known as *Espionage*.
Then it was known under the codename *Kona* as a nod to the coffee rich climes of the Pacific Northwest.

PRIMARY FUNCTION

The Agency is a multiplayer shooter with a fat dose of MMO gameplay. At the simplest level, you can jump in for 15 minutes of player-versus-player carnage. At the other end of the spectrum, you'll undertake elaborate missions and face A.I. enemies that you'll want to tackle with a team of buddies. When you're not saving the world, you'll have access to the kinds of social and crafting features you'd expect in any MMO, but with their own spin.

For the moment-to-moment gameplay, you'll be able to create a character, pick an Agency (uptown super-spies of UNITE or the downtown mercenaries of ParaGON) and start having fun. You'll be able to choose from a variety of specialties based on what you want to achieve in a given gaming session. You can choose from a straight combat specialty if you want to go out and wreak havoc. You can choose a stealth specialty if you want to sneak ahead, distract or disable guards and security, and more. You can choose a support specialty if you want to help your team with health, power-ups, situational awareness, deploy gadgets like turrets, hack into security defenses, and more. Lastly, you can collect the outfits and credentials needed to form aliases to give you access to areas that you can't enter with an M60 strapped to your back, and NPCs who might not take kindly to seeing you in a uniform.

Regardless of what you choose, as you work alone or with others to complete missions and other activities, you'll gain experience for your overall rank within your parent agency (giving you access to even more goodies) and towards a new title for the specialty you used for that mission.

Must get friends.

LOCATION

Our target platforms are the PS3 and PC. You will be able to solo just fine, however we will require an online connection to play.

Sony Online development, plus Sony platform, equals opportunity for interoperability. This should happen.

RELATIONSHIPS

At this time we haven't announced whether we will support cross-platform play.

SUPPORT

Currently a little over sixty operatives work on the title. Team members have worked on everything from shooters like Half-life and Call of Duty 4 to massively multiplayer games like Asheron's Call and EverQuest.

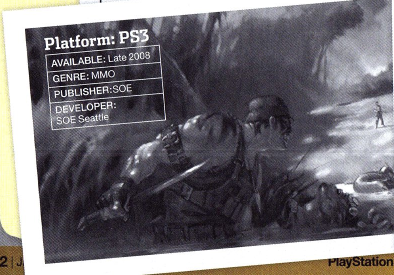
SPECIAL SKILLS

You'll collect in-game characters known as Operatives to flesh out your own pocket agency. These collectable characters will provide you goods and services in real time, whether or not you're currently logged in. This is as simple as having an assist Op working in the background to help you make it through a mission, crafting new weapons/gadgets/vehicles, or investigating parts of the world you can't go to in order to unlock new missions and activities. You can share and trade Operatives of varying ranks and rarity in order to build the perfect agency. Sometimes they'll team up to resolve assignments or in the case of Joint Agencies (equivalent of a Guild), multiple players will be able to share Operatives on long-term assignments to build very special things indeed.

Double Oh: spy life involves driving fast cars and visiting high-end gambling establishments. Sold.

POTENTIAL

Expect a robust public Beta period for both the PC and the PS3.



Platform: PS3

AVAILABLE: Late 2008
GENRE: MMO
PUBLISHER: SOE
DEVELOPER: SOE Seattle

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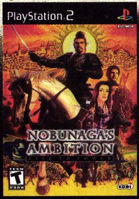
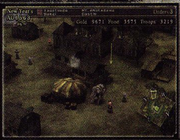
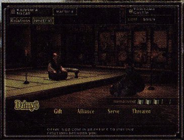




SEVEN SCENARIOS IN FULL 3D - FROM 1551'S STRUGGLE FOR POWER TO EVENTS FOLLOWING NOBUNAGA'S DEATH IN 1582.



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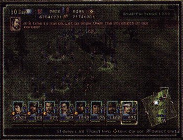

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TO UNITE ALL UNDER HEAVEN.

TEEN
T
Alchohol Reference
Mild Language
Mild Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

PlayStation 2

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WWW.KOEI.COM/RISETOPOWER

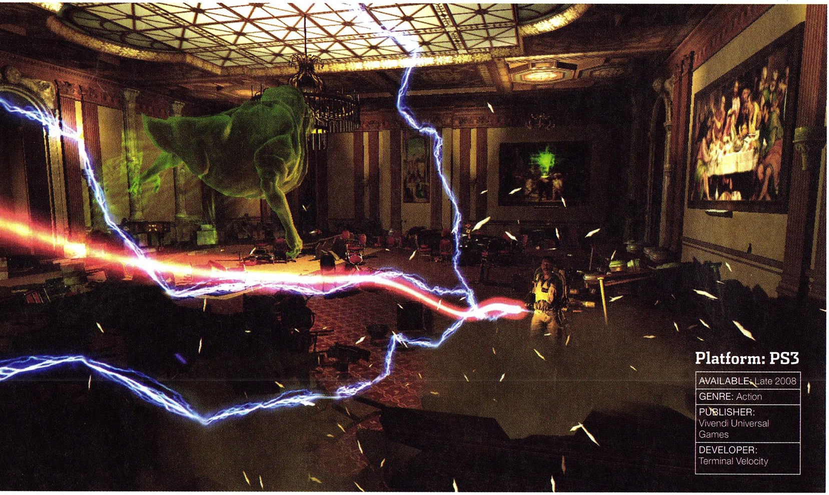
No. 8

Ghostbusters

Ghostbusters

The original cast returns for the sequel they always wanted to make

Hope you guys like S'mores... lots of 'em!



Platform: PS3

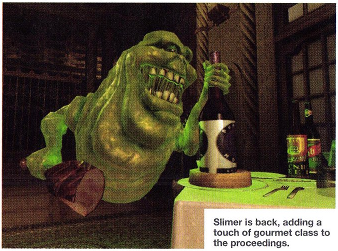
AVAILABLE: Late 2008
GENRE: Action
PUBLISHER: Vivendi Universal Games
DEVELOPER: Terminal Velocity

Remember, whatever you do, don't cross the streams!

A third movie in the *Ghostbusters* franchise has been in development hell for the better part of a decade, with Dan Akroyd, co-writer of the first two films, most eager to get it off the ground. Now it's finally happening, with co-writers and stars Harold Ramis and Bill Murray onboard — only as a videogame. Vivendi Universal Games and developer Terminal Reality (*BloodRayne*) are working closely with the trio, who will co-write the script, and reprise their roles via voice-over.

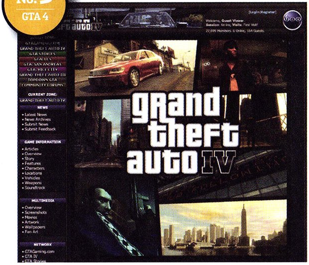
The tentatively titled *Ghostbusters* will take place shortly after *Ghostbusters II* and sees the team — which also includes Winston Zeddmore (played by the returning Ernie Hudson) — back in action catching ghosts in Manhattan. Annie Potts (Ghostbusters receptionist Janine Melnitz) and William Atherton (that jerk from the Environmental Protection Agency) are also set to reprise their roles in the game. The first screens are enough to give any child of the ´80s goose bumps.

Where's Rick Moranis? The *Ghostbusters* experience won't truly be complete without the geek-tastic CPA Louis Tully. Plus, Moranis needs the work. His last gig was voicing Rutt in 2006's direct-to-video *Brother Bear 2*.



Slimer is back, adding a touch of gourmet class to the proceedings.

No. 9
GTA 4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• GTA IV
• GTA Stories
grand theft auto IV

Grand Theft Auto IV

Fans Fill the GTA IV Info Void

As we wait for Rockstar itself to release new information about what to expect from *GTAIV*, and what they've been working on since our first opportunity to see the game, the fan sites have collected every last detail. So you want to know what's new? Check out these sites and their forums to see what fans like you are talking about.

www. gta4.net

Slick Layout: White text on a black background may not be the healthiest color combination for our eyes, but we love the clean, open design.

Guns Galore: A Weapons tab leads you to a list of weapons that will probably be in the game, based on the trailers. It mentions each weapon's caliber, capacity, and background.

Busy Forums: Of all the forums, the ones at GTA4.net were the most active. Our favorite thread? "Missions you DON'T want in 4."

www. gtagaming.com

GTA Artistry: With sections for screenshots, movies, official art, fan art, and art interpretations (called "Things to Notice") as well as an elegant art opener, this site wins The Best *GTA IV* Art award.

Preview Gallery: We like the quick links to previews that lead you straight to a forum thread so you can extrapolate on what you just read.

planetgrandtheftauto.gamespy.com/gta4/

Educated Guesswork: This site includes a shot-by-shot analysis of the first *GTA IV* trailer. You're bound to learn an interesting tidbit or two you hadn't already heard… if not in the actual analysis, then in the five pages of comments that follow.

Countdown to NoWhen: You can download a *GTA IV* Countdown Screensaver. As of print time, the official word was that *GTA IV* has been pushed to sometime in Spring 2008, so we're not sure how the countdown works now. You need a FilePlanet subscription to download it.

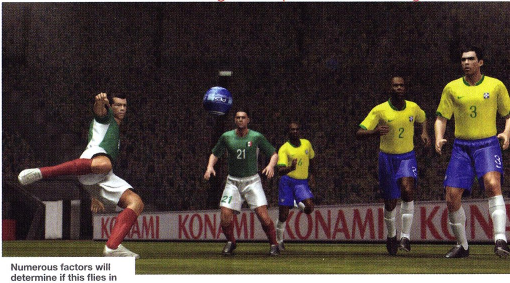
www.thegtaplace.com/gta4/

Hopes and Dreams: If Rockstar won't release more information, we'll make stuff up! At least that's the mentality behind fans of this site. They feature a slew of "Fake Screens" of scenes they'd like to see in *GTA IV*.

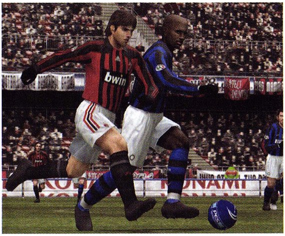
No. 10
Pro Evolution Soccer

Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

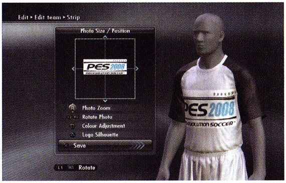
That's right. We picked a soccer game.



Numerous factors will determine if this flies in or over!



PS3 delivers striking player likenesses, like Kaka and Viera here.


Edit ▸ Edit team ▸ Strip
Photo Size / Position
PES 2008
Photo Zoom
Rotate Photo
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Logo Silhouette
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L1 R1 Rotate

Take a pic, then skin it to a player and put yourself right in the action.

It almost feels like a secret. A club of sports fans "in the know" who have reveled in the finely tuned soccer action delivered by Konami's *Pro Evolution Soccer* series. Where EA Sports' yearly *FIFA* shines with its visuals, *PES* has the on-field gameplay. Fluid animations, perfect ball physics, and tactically aware players provide a truly amazing soccer flow.

The series has evolved in *FIFA*'s shadow, often overlooked due to not having licensing rights to all the real world teams, conferences, and players. But even that is changing, with the inclusion of more and more teams from the world's top leagues. For 2008 you'll be able to embark on an incredibly deep online mode where you create your own team and play a fully ranked competition. You may think it a wildcard selection, but trust us, soccer fan or not, *PES* should be on your radar.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOW FLOOR

THE HARDCORE REVIEWS

SHADOW WALKER
HEROES
CSI: MIAMI
ASSASSIN'S CREED
AND MORE!

GUITAR HERO MOBILE PG. 010

A NEW LEASE ON THE GREAT MOBILE LIFE

MORE CONTENT ON EACH PAGE, AND A FRESH LOOK ON WHAT'S NEW

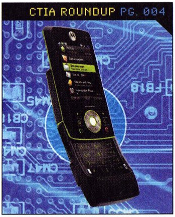
Another month, another insert packed with games for your mobile.

We live in this generous space of your magazine to chronicle the burgeoning (and increasingly creative) mobile gaming arena. Game developers are getting smarter about their interfaces. Phone makers are getting savvier about how to tailor their sliders and flip-phones for a faster and comfier frag. Even confusing development platforms—Java Mobile? Brew? Windows Mobile? Palm OS?—are slowly giving way as standardized advents creep in. The new Nokia N-Gage platform, and Google's Android platform, are proof of that ("Gphone," anyone?). So what were we going to do? Sit and wait for it? Not when there's so much going on. It was time for a redesign, and for a new look on the games we love.

– THE CELL PHONE GANG

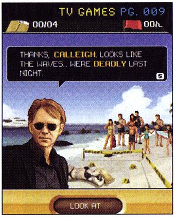
INSIDE

CTIA ROUNDUP PG. 004

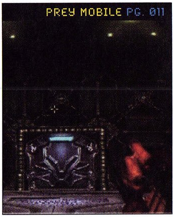


SHADOWWALKER PG. 009

TV GAMES PG. 009

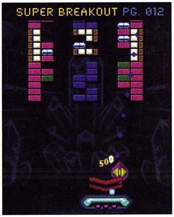

00/04
THANKS, CALLEIGH. LOOKS LIKE THE WAVES... WERE DEADLY LAST NIGHT.
LOOK AT

PREY MOBILE PG. 011



ASSASSINS CREED PG. 011

SUPER BREAKOUT PG. 012



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THE HARD CELL
THE LATEST PHONES MAKING THEIR WAY TO THE STATES, FRESH FROM CTIA

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FEATURE
WE EXERCISE OUR FRET FINGERS ON AN AWESOME GUITAR HERO MOBILE

PAGE 010
PREVIEWS
SIDE-SCROLLERS SUDDENLY LOOK ATTRACTIVE AGAIN WITH SHADOWALKER

PAGE 010
GAME REVIEWS
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CSI: MIAMI
PREY MOBILE
ASSASSIN'S CREED
KOBE BRYANT PRO BASKETBALL 2008
URBAN ATTACK
SUPER BREAKOUT
AMERICAN POPSTAR

CELLPLAY
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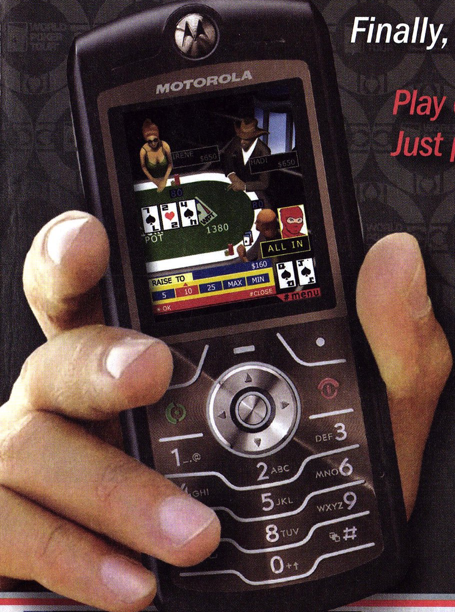
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Motorola RIZR Z8

Motorola RAZR 2

Samsung BlackJack II

CTIA ROUNDUP

WE TROD OFF TO CTIA—THE TWICE-YEARLY WIRELESS ENTERTAINMENT AND TECHNOLOGY, THIS TIME IN SAN FRANCISCO—AND FLITTED FROM BOOTH TO BOOTH TO UNCOVER FIVE NEW AND COMING-SOON HANDSETS THAT HAVE BEEN GETTING MORE BLOG BUZZ THAN FAKE STEVE JOBS. OUR QUICK HANDS-ON IMPRESSIONS:

PHONE	BAND	THE GOOD	THE BAD	OUR VERDICT
Samsung BlackJack II	**GSM quad-band w/ HSDPA 850 / 1900**	Improved build quality, convenient new center scroll wheel, 2.0 MP camera (up from 1.3 MP), Windows Mobile 6, MP3 and video players, built-in IM clients, GPS.	Black version's shiny surface looks great, until you lay your greasy mitts on it. WM6 is still as graceful as a condor.	A slick package that isn't revolutionary, but still feels tighter than the original. Has all the marks of a solid version 2.0.
Motorola RIZR Z8	**GSM w/ HSDPA**	2.0 MP camera with flash, Symbian OS multimedia galore with video recorder & player, MP3, beautiful materials & screen, nifty "banana" kick-out design.	Designed for pygmy hands. Can't be opened or closed without fingering the screen. Admirable UI design is slightly awkward at times. Why has it taken so long to get to the US market?	We'd fall in love with Moto's new trendy, some-times-awkward art school kid if our thumbs weren't the size of hoofs.
Motorola RAZR 2	**GSM and HSDPA (with the V9 where available), 3G CDMA**	No chin! New Linux-based OS, 2.0 MP camera. Slightly bigger feel belies its BMW-like fit and finish. Haptic feedback on the new front touch screen gives the iPhone a touch of envy.	Alphabet soup of at least three different versions. The new 2" external display isn't nearly as useful as we want it to be. Doesn't have the whiz-bang multimedia options of other phones.	Our baby's all grown up. It's classy, slick, and sheds its Armani suit from the workday to go clubbing at night. Now if only it were smarter...

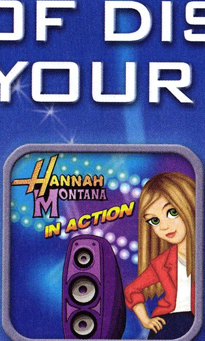
OUR TOP 3 GAMING PHONES

Nokia N81 8GB
When we were demoed the N81, what with its dedicated gaming buttons, large screen and Nokia N-Gage, we were hooked. And now it'll have an 8 GB flavor? Sign us up.

Sony Ericsson W580i
This series of phone has been tried and true for awesome sound quality and responsive five-way buttons. So what if we want to listen to a bit of music along the way?

LG 9400
Verizon's flip-out screen goes from vertical to horizontal in point-three seconds flat. Its gorgeous visuals and booming sound definitely get our gaming attention.

BRING THE MAGIC OF DISNEY TO YOUR PHONE!



Hannah Montana, the best of both worlds! Play as Miley and Hannah, behind the scenes and rocking on stage for a benefit concert.

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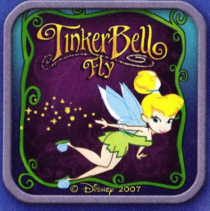
Hannah Montana in Action



Fly! as Tink through the worlds of Neverland. Collect gems and explore vivid, magical places as the beloved fairy.

Text **TINK** to **386**
to purchase
Tinker Bell: Fly!

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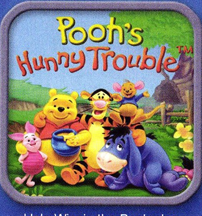

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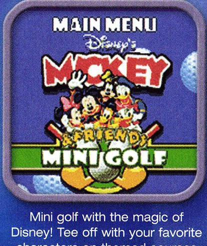
to purchase Winnie the Pooh's
Hunny Trouble



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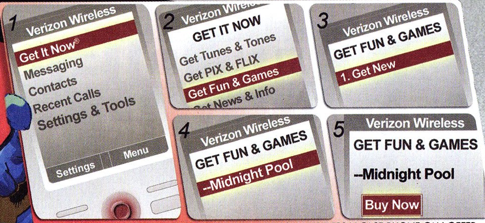
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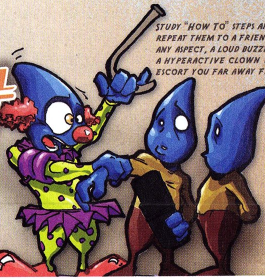

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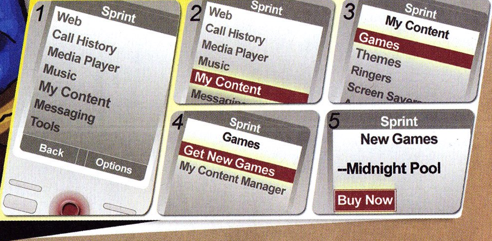
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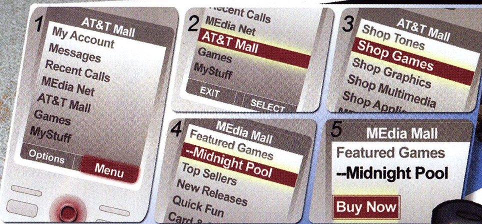
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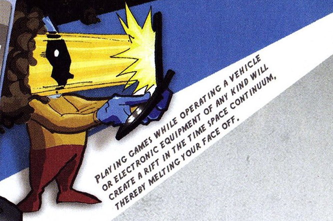
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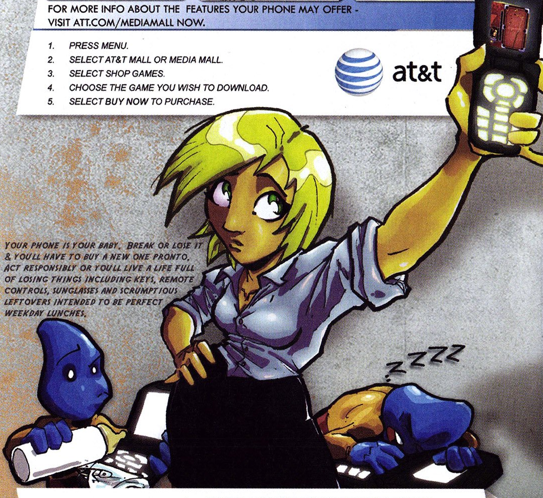
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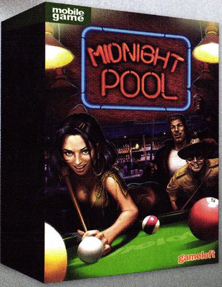
mobile game
MIDNIGHT POOL
gameloft

T··Mobile·
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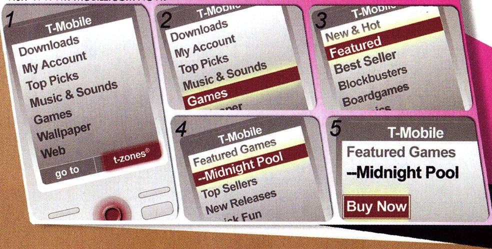
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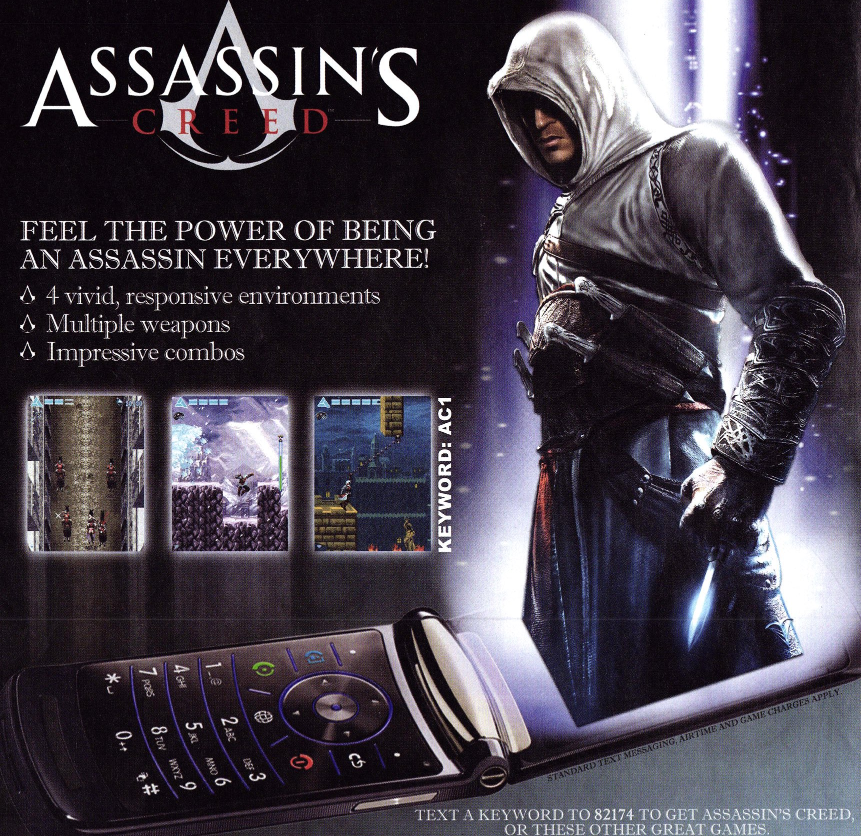
ASSASSIN'S CREED



FEEL THE POWER OF BEING AN ASSASSIN EVERYWHERE!

- 4 vivid, responsive environments
- Multiple weapons
- Impressive combos

KEYWORD: AC1

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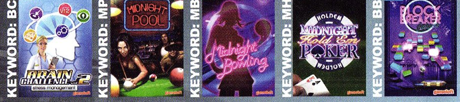

KEYWORD: BC1 **KEYWORD: MP1** **KEYWORD: MB1** **KEYWORD: MH1** **KEYWORD: BB1**

at&t T··Mobile· stick together UBISOFT

Assassin's Creed is also available on video game consoles.
(Console versions ESRB rated MATURE with Blood, Strong Language, Violence.)

gameloft

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SHADOWALKER

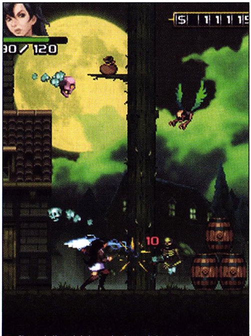
BOUNTY HUNTERS WITH SHADY PASTS ALWAYS GET OUR ATTENTION

There's an elephant in the room, and it's telling us that mobile games rarely get the story, depth and gameplay that their console brethrens enjoy. Chalk it up to the game-and-go mobile experience, or the adolescent age of the mobile games market—choose your poison. The point is, very few original mobile games are as immediately intriguing as *Shadowalker*.

Shadowalker picks up on the side-scrolling action of console days past and uses it to its best button-mashing potential. Although the game won't be released until early next year, Glu gave us an early look on what's already looking to be a mood-setting mini-epic.

As a female bounty hunter, Pheonix Shadowalker earns her spending gold by keeping the recent glut of creepy spirits away from local villages. Through 12 locales and 20 levels, she's smart enough to alternate between her ranged and melee weapons automatically, depending on the distance to those spooks. As she moves from quest to quest, she gains access to different guns, upgrades, swords, armor, and high-heeled boots (okay, the last one we made up). There's over six hours of gameplay packed into this side-scroller, so you'd better get comfy on that subway seat.

The real deal-killer with games like this, though, is often their lack of save options. Our expectations have grown a bit since the days of *Mega Man* circa 1987, and twenty years later it'd be nice to have the option to pick up where we left off. Thankfully Glu's London development team delivers in spades, one-upping the current mobile space by allowing multiple save slots instead of the usual single slot. Now that's progress.



Flying skulls and skeletons be damned! Secretly, we've always wanted to be spook-fighting bounty hunters.

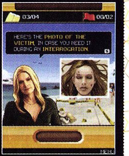
Not only that, but the graphics we saw are chillingly themed and animated. Backgrounds operate on a separate layer, and pan slowly as you scroll through. From our multi-level demo, *Shadowalker* is shaping up to be a sure-fire spook-fest.

GENRE: Adventure // **DEVELOPER**: Glu Mobile // **PUBLISHER**: Glu Mobile // **RELEASE DATE**: January 2008

TV GAMES

CSI: MIAMI_

DEAD MEN TELL TALES



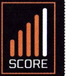
HERE'S THE PHOTO OF THE VICTIM, IN CASE YOU NEED IT DURING AN INTERROGATION.

When a dead stripper washes up on the Miami shore, crime scene investigator Horatio Caine is there. Based on the hit TV series, this game a single murder in four chapters.

As Horatio, you investigate crime scenes, question suspects, help with an autopsy, and process evidence. The simplified mechanics work surprisingly well—from searching for clues around the 2D environment to identifying blood and fabric samples back in the lab. The goal is to conclusively link evidence between victim and perp.

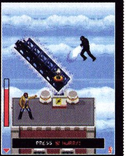
Fairly short at under two hours of gameplay, *CSI: Miami* is still a lot of fun for amateur sleuths.

GENRE: Adventure // **DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER**: Gameloft // **CARRIERS**: All Carriers // **SAVE**: Auto Save // **SOUND**: Yes // **VIBRATION**: No



HEROES_

POWER PLAYERS

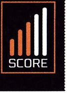


The blockbuster TV series about ordinary people with extraordinary abilities has been boiled down into a very ordinary 2D side-scrolling action game. You alternate as the super-strong Niki, the time-bending Hiro, and the multi-powered Peter in 11 levels inspired by storylines from *Heroes*' first season.

To its credit, gameplay is varied. Niki's levels are *Double Dragon*-like beat-em-ups; Hiro uses time control to avoid guards and alarms; and Peter flies or levitates objects in his search for the evil Sylar.

Ultimately, though, *Heroes* is a bland exercise in turning a hit TV show into a mobile game. Unless you absolutely must "save the cheerleader, save the world," there are better options.

GENRE: Action // **DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER**: Gameloft // **CARRIERS**: All Carriers // **SAVE**: Auto-save // **SOUND**: Yes // **VIBRATION**: No



LINE 6
Gibson

Characters Judy Nails and Axel Steel join Guitar Hero Mobile, along with guitars like the Gibson Les Paul, FLying V and Double Neck. A true online leaderboard adds massive shred appeal, as well. We couldn't beat the developers, but we got close.

49228
4
♪119
ROCK
C

Just like in the console game, you rack up "Star Power" by hitting strings of notes in succession. Press the * key (appropriate, eh?) to unleash it, and your points start to multiply.

GUITAR HERO MOBILE

LET YOUR FRET FINGERS DO THE WALKING

Find yourself a quiet room or a headset, because you'll want to turn up the volume. Guitar Hero Mobile is the true mobile port of rock, and as long as your handset can handle it, this game gets as many encores as it wants.

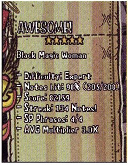
Hands-On Mobile got the official license from Activision to port a full 51 songs, two characters (Axel Steel and Judy Nails), three venues, and four guitars into our pockets. Like the console game, Guitar Hero Mobile starts you off with four "Opening Licks" (songs like Santana's "Black Magic Woman" and Wolfmother's "Woman"), along with two bonus sets. At first blush you'll have 15 songs; after a month of owning the game, you can download three new ones. Twelve song packs means you'll have a year before running out of tunes. Interestingly enough, to keep file sizes down your phone only has two songs at any given time. Accessing a different one will download it, and on the Verizon network one song took less than 40 seconds.

We balked initially at the simplified controls (there are only three "notes"), but soon realized how onerous five would have been. At expert difficulty, riffing along to "Cherub Rock" or "Monkey Wrench" is a true accomplishment one that you can track on online leaderboards and unlockable Accomplishment lists. The game is so full-fledged we were a bit dismayed songs are cut to two minutes; but we'll forgive and forget. Just remember to bring a fast phone, 'cause you don't want to miss a single note on this one.

GENRE: Music // **DEVELOPER:** Machineworks Northwest // **PUBLISHER:** Hands-On Mobile // **CURRENT CARRIERS:** Verizon now, all major carriers by February 2008 // **ONLINE PLAY:** Leaderboards // **SAVES:** Yes // **VIBRATION:** No // **SOUND:** Yes

SCORE

INTERVIEW_ PRODUCER JJ LECHLEITER ON SQUEEZING EPIC SOUND INTO YOUR MOBILE



AWESOME!
★★★★★
Black Magic Woman
- Difficulty: Expert
- Notes hit: 98% (205/208)
- Score: 82159
- Streak: 134 Notes!
- SP Phrases: 4/4
- AVG Multiplier 3.0X

How hard was it to port this massive console game to the mobile?

We actually worked with Activision to use the same audio they used in the console versions. We reduced the file sizes, but all the audio tracks are multi-channel audio: There's the guitar track, a channel with the background instruments and vocals, another channel playing the "boos," the missed note sound...so that was really incredible to work with such complicated audio for a mobile game. It was definitely one of our challenges.

Why reduce the controls to three buttons?

That was something we discussed at great length—when you try doing this with five buttons on the mobile, it's tough to map out in your brain. We did some tests with that, and it's just more fun by having those three rows; rapid transitions and simultaneous presses give you that added difficulty. We want people to actually feel like they're *playing* it on the phone.

Some of the tracks are cut a bit short.

Yeah, every track is two minutes. Songs in general are anywhere from two minutes, to I think "Freebird" was over nine minutes long on *Guitar Hero*. We really wanted this to be bite-sized: fun, and quick so that you feel accomplished after playing on the go.

PREY MOBILE

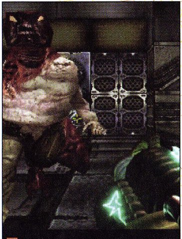
READY FOR 28 LEVELS OF FIRST-PERSON ACTION?

Prey Mobile is a first-person shooter in which the player fights his or her way through an alien-infested environment, dodging hazards and picking up useful weapons and items along the way.

Sounds like fun? It is–kinda. I found using cell phone buttons to control the first-person action made the gameplay distinctly tricky. Turning, stepping back, pointing down and blasting the critters that are attacking–a typical *Prey Mobile* situation–requires many very accurate key presses. And to me, that put a damper on the fun, as the challenge became more of a battle with the controls, rather than with the aliens that were trying to kill me.

If I spent enough time mastering the controls, I'm sure the pace would quicken. But to be honest, I'd prefer to spend the time I'd otherwise have to invest getting over the learning curve playing something a little more straightforward and intuitive–like a classic arcade game, puzzler or whatever. That's because I play cell phone games when doing things like waiting for a bus or standing in line, and I want something light and fun to keep me occupied for a few minutes. If I want to play something more complicated, I'll wait 'til I get home and boot up the PS3 or PC.

However, if you have a cell phone with decent processing horsepower that'll let you get the most out of the graphics, and you like your games deeper and more challenging than your average arcade-type 5-minute special, you'll find *Prey Mobile* a highly enjoyable game.



The graphics are certainly more engrossing than your average mobile game, but is that all that matters?

GENRE: FPS // **DEVELOPER:** MachineWorks Northwest // **PUBLISHER:** Skyzone // **CURRENT CARRIERS:** All Major // **ONLINE PLAY:** No // **SAVES:** Yes // **VIBRATION:** Yes // **SOUND:** Yes

SCORE

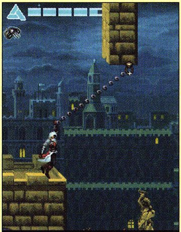
ASSASSIN'S CREED

DEAD ON ARRIVAL

Say you want to port a complex and visually rich 3D console game to cell phones. Gameloft's solution in bringing to mobiles Ubisoft's story about a master assassin charged with ending the Third Crusade in ancient Jerusalem was to turn it into a 2D side-scrolling platform game, albeit one that manages to retain the cloak-and-dagger flavor of the original game.

A mixture of stealth and *Prince of Persia*-style acrobatics are at the core of each of the game's 13 levels. As you hunt for your "mark," you'll have to blend in with crowds, maneuver around rooftops, and perform moves that would leave Olympic gymnasts flustered. The fatal flaw is the game's over-packed, unresponsive control scheme–pulling off even a simple attack can turn into a game of Finger Twister.

Not even slick production values and creative porting can make up for the fact that *Assassin's Creed* on mobile phones is frustratingly difficult to control. Put it out of its misery.



Only the extremely dextrous need download the mobile version of this intense console port. Its controls are just too fast and furious.

GENRE: Action/Platform // **DEVELOPER:** Gameloft // **PUBLISHER:** Gameloft // **CARRIERS:** All Major // **ONLINE PLAY:** Yes // **SAVES:** Auto-save // **VIBRATION:** No // **SOUND:** Yes

SCORE

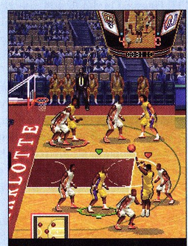
KOBE BRYANT PRO BASKETBALL 2008

DOUBLE DRIBBLE

Any attempt to transfer a game as fast-paced and populated with players as basketball to mobile phones is going to be a big challenge. Gameloft mostly shoots and scores with *Kobe Bryant Pro Basketball 2008*, a hoops game starring the American All-Star shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers.

Not only does the game manage to pack in a full 80-game season mode, it also has exhibition matches, a quick-play setting that allows you to jump right into a game, and two mini-game challenge modes–a slam-dunk contest and a 3-point shootout. You can also edit your team roster and select favorite strategies, and the game tracks your stats as you play.

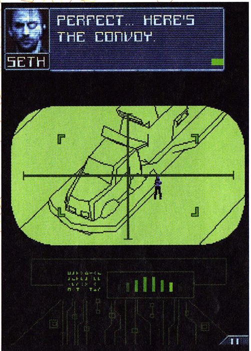
The difficult task is keeping track of your players. Given the small screen, knowing who has the ball and who you're trying to pass to as the camera scrolls from one side of the court to the other will keep b-ball fans squinting.



We were surprised—shocked, even—to find a game as complex as basketball packed into such a good mobile package.

GENRE: Sports // **DEVELOPER:** Gameloft // **PUBLISHER:** Gameloft // **CARRIERS:** All Major // **ONLINE PLAY:** Yes // **SAVES:** Auto-save // **VIBRATION:** Yes // **SOUND:** Yes

SCORE



PERFECT... HERE'S THE CONVOY.

SETH

Snooping with binoculars is useful, but the true fun comes in *Urban Attack's* unique sniper scope mode. Your gun even wobbles realistically in your hand as you steady your shot and reload.

URBAN ATTACK

IT'S NOT PRETTY, BUT IT'S A UNIQUE TAKE ON MOBILE FPS

In 2037, America and a Red Mafia-controlled Russia are at it again in another arms race. As a cyborg enforcer in Russia's covert UCCK organization, you're charged with taking out a group of dissidents. As the story in this first-person shooter unfolds, though, your purpose becomes more and more tangled.

One look at the screens will tell you that *Urban Attack* isn't a graphical wonder. Its wire frame models and chintzy stick characters lead the charge of knocks against the game. Luckily, visuals aren't the highlights here.

Urban Attack's main pull is its unique gameplay: for a mobile game, it's impressive to see genuine FPS features like sniper rifle sights, ammo control, and multiple weapons at your disposal. Genuinely fun mini-games add to the creative storyline, too, and auto-saves mean you can pick up your game whenever you have time. Skinning this action FPS would have gone a long way toward making a killer new mobile blockbuster.

GENRE: FPS // **DEVELOPER:** Vivendi Mobile // **PUBLISHER:** Vivendi Mobile // **CARRIERS:** All Major // **ONLINE PLAY:** No // **SAVES:** Auto-save // **VIBRATION:** No // **SOUND:** Yes

SCORE

SUPER BREAKOUT

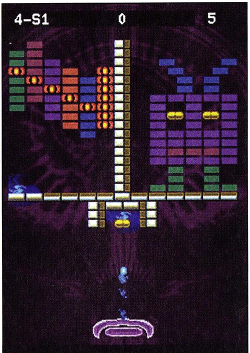
THE SAME GAME, IN A NEW LOOK

Atari's classic brick-busting Breakout is one of the founding fathers of videogaming, making its debut waaay back in the same year that America celebrated its 200th Birthday as an independent nation. Now, 31 years later, the game that has appeared on pretty much every gaming platform ever invented is available on your cell phone.

The basic formula is still the same—break all the bricks on a screen to progress to the next level—but Super Breakout adds plenty of cool extras, including a variety of different gameplay modes, and even unlockable secret bonus levels. Some of the screens are fiendishly designed, and feature some cool surprises like additional balls that can be broken out of cavities in the brick wall, and explosive power-ups.

Super Breakout is great fun to play...but be warned. Much of the enjoyment depends on the type of phone you're using. Or to be more specific, the feel and responsiveness of your phone's buttons. The original Breakout coin-op used a paddle to control the bat, which enabled very precise movements so that the ball could be bounced exactly where the player wanted it. Unless you're using something like a Blackberry, which has an awesomely accurate mini-trackball, you have to use buttons to control the paddle—and that can be a problem. The Sprint Sanyo phone I used to play this game, for example, has horrible, squishy buttons, and as a result control was extremely vague and imprecise. I felt lucky to actually hit the ball, let alone guide it to where I wanted it, which unfortunately made the game frustrating to play.

On a phone with responsive buttons, however, Super Breakout delivers completely the opposite experience—it's incredibly fun and extremely addictive. Indeed, it's the perfect game for cell play. If you're confident that your phone buttons are responsive enough to give you decent control over the bat, Super Breakout is highly recommended.



Back when your crazy uncle was getting out of jail for protesting the Vietnam War, Nolan Bushnell's original *Breakout* was hitting the arcade. Luckily, we've progressed a bit since then.

GENRE: Arcade // **DEVELOPER:** Glu // **PUBLISHER:** Glu // **CARRIERS:** All Major // **ONLINE PLAY:** No // **SAVES:** Auto-save // **VIBRATION:** Yes // **SOUND:** Yes

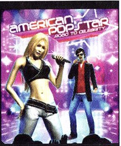
SCORE

AMERICAN POPSTAR: ROAD TO CELEBRITY_ IDOL WORSHIP

A cross between an adventure game and The Sims, American Popstar puts your wannabe singer on a path to super-stardom in this smart, tongue-in-cheek homage to American Idol.

Start by creating your personal avatar, and then try to jump into the business as a nobody (with a lot of help and prodding from your nosy mom). Practice singing and dancing to raise your skill; chat, joke, and flirt with onlookers to elevate your charisma; even shower to keep your hygiene in check. Your goal is to audition and be accepted into a reality TV show singing competition, followed by record deals and concerts.

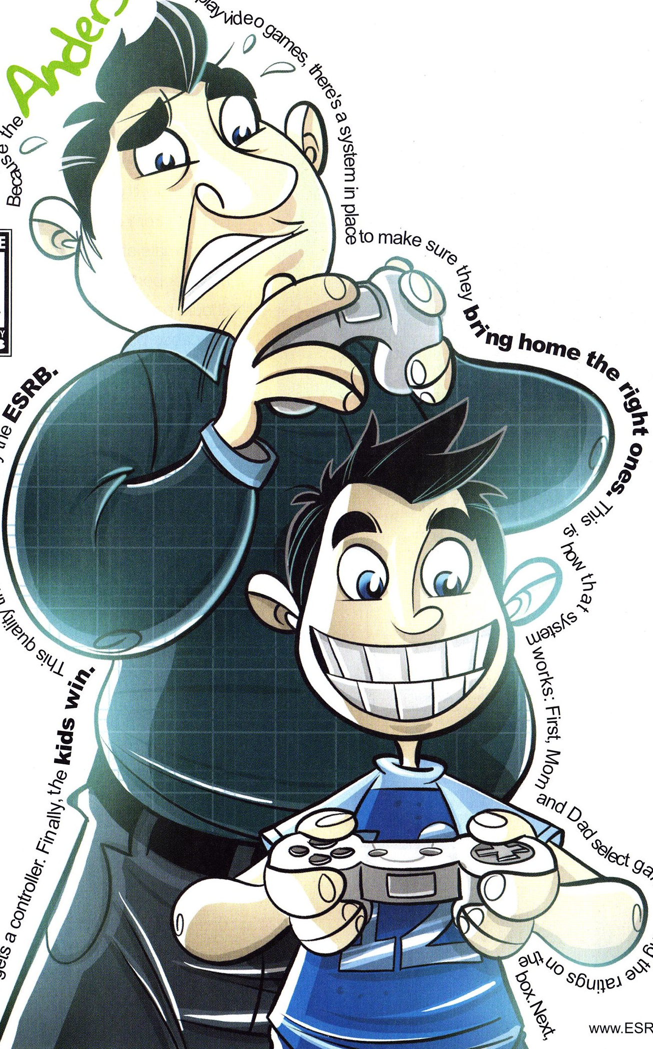
With an intuitive control scheme, humorous dialogue, Sims-style personal management, and the ability to save anywhere, American Popstar is a surprisingly deep game that's been perfectly tailored for mobile phones. Its variety of activities, 38 locations, and wild situations will keep you playing (and replaying) for days.



GENRE: Social Simulation // **DEVELOPER:** Gameloft // **PUBLISHER:** Gameloft // **CARRIERS:** All carriers // **SAVE:** Save anywhere // **SOUND:** Yes //

SCORE

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB



Because the **Andersons** play video games, there's a system in place to make sure they **bring home the right ones.** This is how that system works: First, Mom and Dad select games using the ratings on the box. Next, everyone gets a controller. Finally, the **kids win.** This quality time is presented by the **ESRB.**

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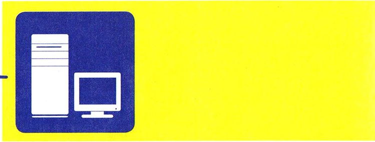
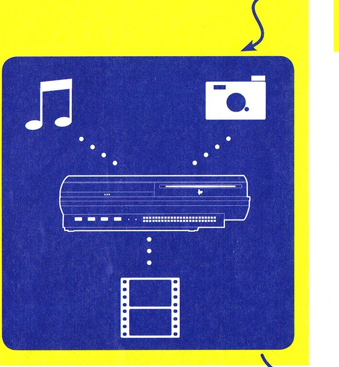
PlayStation 3: Media Central

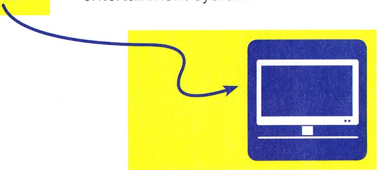
By Will Smith

Editor-In-Chief, Maximum PC and maximumpc.com





Your PS3 is a mighty powerful system, and when configured to talk nicely to your home PC will deliver movies, music, and pictures from computer to TV screen. File formats and streaming, codecs, and network ports are scary words, but you should be comfortable with all of them after absorbing our extensive guide to putting the PS3 at the center of your entertainment system.



The secret to streaming your PC files to your PS3 is a free program called TVersity. TVersity is a standalone media streaming utility, designed to stream video to devices that support a number of different protocols, including UPNP, DNLA, and Flash video. The driving goal for the folks behind TVersity is to let you stream your media to any network-connected device using the software. While it's still in beta and is in constant development, TVersity works reasonably well now, although it can be tricky to configure the first time.

UPNP: Universal Plug and Play, a protocol designed to allow devices to connect over a network with a minimum of fuss.

DLNA: Digital Living Network Alliance is an organization set up across a wide range of companies working in the networking space, aimed at ensuring seamless interoperability between devices, and usability even for the least tech savvy.

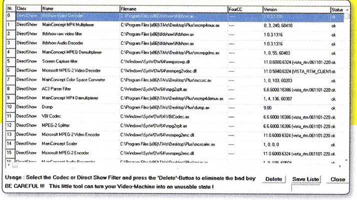
Flash: Adobe's web application that delivers video content to your PC.

Software download shopping list

Before we begin, download these pieces of software:

- **Tversity** (http://tversity.com/)
- **ffdshow tryout** (http://sourceforge.net/projects/ffdshow-tryout/)
- **Codec Sniper** (www.videohelp.com/tools/Codec_Sniper).

Download them, and then come right back.



Nr.	Class	Name	Filename	FourCC	Version	Status
0	DirectShow	ffdshow Video Decoder	C:\Program Files (x86)\ffdshow\ffdshow.ax	----	1.0.3.1316	ok
1	DirectShow	MainConcept MP4 Multiplexer	C:\Program Files (x86)\TiVo\Desktop\Plus\mcmp4mux.ax	----	0, 3, 240, 60410	ok
2	DirectShow	ffdshow raw video filter	C:\Program Files (x86)\ffdshow\ffdshow.ax	----	1.0.3.1316	ok
3	DirectShow	ffdshow Audio Decoder	C:\Program Files (x86)\ffdshow\ffdshow.ax	----	1.0.3.1316	ok
4	DirectShow	MainConcept MPEG Demultiplexer	C:\Program Files (x86)\TiVo\Desktop\Plus\mcmpgdmx.ax	----	1, 0, 55, 60403	ok
5	DirectShow	Screen Capture filter	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\wmpsrcwp.dll	----	11.0.6000.6324 (vista_rtm.061101-220	ok
6	DirectShow	Microsoft MPEG-2 Video Decoder	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\msmpeg2vdec.dll	----	11.0.5840.6324 (VISTA_RTM_CLIENT	ok
7	DirectShow	MainConcept Color Space Converter	C:\Program Files (x86)\TiVo\Desktop\Plus\mccsc.ax	----	1, 0, 103, 60203	ok
8	DirectShow	AC3 Parser Filter	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\mpg2splt.ax	----	6.6.6000.16386 (vista_rtm.061101-220	ok
9	DirectShow	MainConcept MP4 Demultiplexer	C:\Program Files (x86)\TiVo\Desktop\Plus\mcmp4demux.ax	----	1, 4, 136, 60307	ok
10	DirectShow	Dump	C:\Program Files (x86)\TiVo\Desktop\Plus\dump.ax	----	9.00	ok
11	DirectShow	VBI Codec	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\VBICodec.ax	----	6.6.6000.16386 (vista_rtm.061101-220	ok
12	DirectShow	MPEG-2 Splitter	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\mpg2splt.ax	----	6.6.6000.16386 (vista_rtm.061101-220	ok
13	DirectShow	Microsoft MPEG-2 Video Encoder	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\msmpeg2enc.dll	----	11.0.6000.6324 (vista_rtm.061101-220	ok
14	DirectShow	MainConcept Scaler	C:\Program Files (x86)\TiVo\Desktop\Plus\mcscaler.ax	----	1, 0, 0, 0	ok
15	DirectShow	Microsoft MPEG-2 Encoder	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\msmpeg2enc.dll	----	11.0.6000.6324 (vista_rtm.061101-220	ok

Usage : Select the Codec or Direct Show Filter and press the 'Delete'-Button to eliminate the bad boy

BE CAREFUL !!! This little tool can turn your Video-Machine into an unusable state !

Cleaning out your old codecs is necessary, but be very careful!

1. Clean out your old codecs

The number one problem for users of TVersity is having incompatible or conflicting codecs installed. Usually, these are a result of having installed software that includes "every codec you need," such as the K-Lite codec pack. While you can try TVersity, and it may work, you'll save yourself a lot of hassle if you just clean up your codecs before you start.

First, in Windows go to the Add/Remove Programs control panel, and uninstall any codec packs you find in there, as well as utilities like AC3Filter, Xvid, and Divx. Additionally, some applications, such as Nero, also include codecs. You'll need to uninstall them as well (for the time being); you can safely reinstall them when everything's working. When done, reboot the PC and then try to view a movie; if Windows Media Player complains that the codec is missing, you're on the right track and can continue to the next step.

If your video plays, you'll need to run the Codec Sniper, and manually delete the offending codecs from your system. To remove a codec, simply click on it, and select delete.

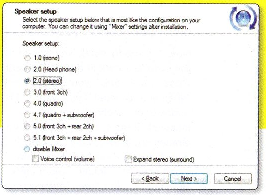
Important: Only delete codecs affiliated with your codec packs (K-Lite, for example) and other codecs you manually installed. Deleting the wrong things here can really break your system, so be careful. Reboot so that any changes made here can take effect. Once your codecs are clean, and your videos won't play anymore, you can move on to the next step.

codecs: The background files that ensure certain video formats are playable on your machine.

Xvid: A video codec for MPEG4 files (the type that the PS3 plays), which is in competition with Divx to be the industry standard method of MPEG4 encoding.

Divx: The codec that started life as a competitor to DVD, but found its niche as a file compression and delivery method for online video. Divx compresses MPEG4 files.

Nero: Disc burning software (CD and DVD) used by many people to put files on hard media. Handy for taking the huge digital files you might be streaming here and creating your own DVD library.



Speaker setup

Select the speaker setup below that is most like the configuration on your computer. You can change it using "Mixer" settings after installation.

Speaker setup:

- ○ 1.0 (mono)
- ○ 2.0 (Head phone)
- ● 2.0 (stereo)
- ○ 3.0 (front 3ch)
- ○ 4.0 (quadro)
- ○ 4.1 (quadro + subwoofer)
- ○ 5.0 (front 3ch + rear 2ch)
- ○ 5.1 (front 3ch + rear 2ch + subwoofer)
- ○ disable Mixer

☐ Voice control (volume) ☐ Expand stereo (surround)

2. Install ffdshow

You have a couple of different codec options available. If you primarily want to stream MPEG4-based media, Divx, Xvid, and the like, ffdshow is the best option. (If you want to stream more advanced H.264-based codecs, you'll need to use a more comprehensive codec pack. For that, we recommend CCCP (http://cccp-project.net/). If you install CCCP, you don't need ffdshow, and vice versa.)

Ffdshow is the secret weapon that will let TVersity transcode all your video. Install the software, selecting the default options for everything. Make sure you choose the default audio option for ffdshow (Stereo - 2 speakers), regardless of your actual speaker configuration. TVersity doesn't work well with the other options.

After you've installed ffdshow, you should be able to view your MPEG4 videos once again in Windows Media Player.

MPEG4: A standard file format used to compress audio and video files. PS3 reads MPEG4 files.

H.264: Essentially a higher quality MPEG4. This is a compression used to compress high-definition files into reasonable sizes. Also known as AVC (Advanced Video Coding), which is also supported by PS3.

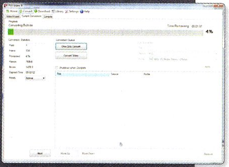
ffdshow: It's a kind of universal codec; it works with most of the MPEG4-based codecs, and also lets you decode Dolby Digital and DTS audio streams.

PS3video9

www.redkawa.com/videoconverters/ps3video9/

An apparently simple method of converting your digital files to PS3 compatibility was using PS3video9. It's another free download, and includes handy functions like a "One-click convert to turn your avi files into MPEG4. To be honest, though, we haven't had a huge amount of success with this software.

The biggest problem has been audio — converted files have had slow-mo soundtracks, or been out of sync with the video. PS3video9 supports multiple settings, audio and video outputs, so with some experimentation you might find a solution that works for your streaming needs.



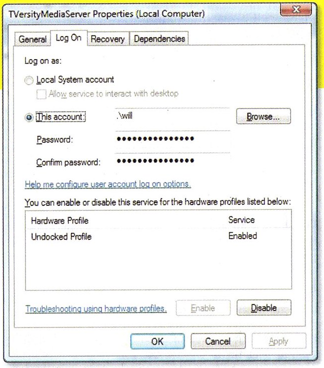
3. Install TVersity

Now it's time to install TVersity. You can use most of the installer's default options, except for the TVersity Codec Pack, which you **DO NOT** want to install. When you're asked if you want to install the TVersity codec pack, uncheck that box. You've already installed all the codecs you need. If your PC is already equipped with Windows Vista, you'll see an error that the TVersity service didn't start properly, so you'll need to manually start it using the shortcut in the TVersity Start Menu folder.

If you want to stream media that's stored on a network share — another machine, a NAS box, or a Windows Home Server — you need to configure the TVersity service to run as a user who has permission to access the network share. You'll need to do that even if your network share is configured to allow everyone access — services which log into the local system account are denied access to the network. To change the login information, go to Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Services, and then scroll down to the TVersity service. Right-click on that, and go to the Log On tab. Click the This account button, and set it to use a username/password that has permission to access that network share. You'll need to restart the service after you've changed the login info; you can do that on the General tab by pressing Stop and then Start.

NAS: Network-attached storage is a storage format (hard drive) on your network that provides files to that network.

TVersity service: A service is an application that runs even when no one's logged into the machine.


TVersityMediaServer Properties (Local Computer)
General
Log On
Recovery
Dependencies
Browse...
Troubleshooting using hardware profiles.
Enable
Disable
OK
Cancel
Apply

Log on as:

○ Local System account

☐ Allow service to interact with desktop

● This account: .\will

Password: •••••••••••••••

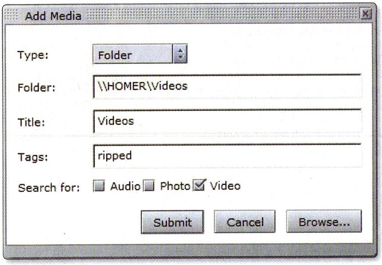
Confirm password: •••••••••••••••

Help me configure user account log on options.

You can enable or disable this service for the hardware profiles listed below:

Hardware Profile	Service
Undocked Profile	Enabled

You will need to configure the TVersity service to run as a user.



Type: Folder

Folder: \\HOMER\Videos

Title: Videos

Tags: ripped

Search for: ☐ Audio ☐ Photo ☑ Video

Remember to tell TVersity what kind of files are in each folder.

4. Add Media to TVersity

This is the easy part. Open up the TVersity client on your media streaming machine, click the big green + sign, and add the folders that contain your media to the machine. It's really important that you tell TVersity the type of content to expect in each folder (the Add Folder option has three check boxes for you to select audio, video, or picture content) — if it adds all the images in your music directory, your photo section will quickly get clogged with all the album art on your rig. That's no fun at all.

After you've added your media, it will take TVersity a while to search all your folders and add everything to its library. Take a ten minute break to walk the dog, make a snack, or play a game. TVersity doesn't work particularly well while it's scanning your library, so it's important that you leave it in peace to do its thing.

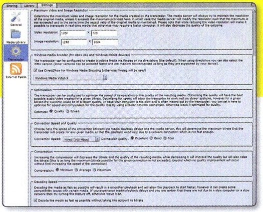
5. Test Streaming

If it's been ten minutes, you should be able to test out your streaming setup. Fire up your PS3, and browse over to the Video tab on the XMB. You should see an entry at the top of the list that's YourPC'sName: TVersity Media Server. If you don't, you should verify that your PS3 is connected to the network, and that your PC's firewall is either disabled, or you've given TVersity permission to listen on port 41952.

If you're able to connect, browse to the Video item, then the My Video Item, and then click All Video and browse down to one of your videos. If you followed the instructions, you should be streaming video to your PS3. It will be crappy, low resolution video, but it will be video. With everything working properly, we can tweak the visual quality in the next step.

PS3: That's the beautiful beast that you've been playing games on. Now it's heading towards being an integral part of your home entertainment setup.

port 41952: Opening ports to allow internet access is not a simple PC process. If you're savvy enough to know how to make that work, well done to you. If not, it's time to read up on the internet about 'port opening.' Our bare bones instruction is to click Start and hit My Network Places, click View Network Connections, right-click on your network connection and select Properties. Click the Advanced tab, then Settings, then Exceptions. Now make sure that the TVersity Media Server and/or port 41952 are on the list. If not, use Add Program or Add Port to make sure they're active.



Maximum Video and Image Resolution

Determine the maximum video and image resolution for the media created by the transcoder. The media server will always try to maintain the resolution of the original media, unless it exceeds the maximum provided here, in which case the media server will modify the resolution such that the maximum is not exceeded and in the same time the aspect ratio of the original media is maintained. Please note that while reducing the video resolution will make it possible to transcode in real-time media that otherwise may require a faster computer, it will also decrease the quality of the outcome.

Video resolution: 1280 × 720

Image resolution: 1280 × 1024

Windows Media Encoder (for Xbox 360 and Windows Mobile devices)

The transcoder can be configured to create Windows Media via ffmpeg or via directshow (the default). When using directshow you can also select the WMV version (lower versions can be encoded faster and are therefore recommended as long as they are supported by your device).

☑ Use DirectShow for Windows Media Encoding (otherwise ffmpeg will be used)

Windows Media Video 9

Optimization

The transcoder can be configured to optimize the speed of its operation or the quality of the resulting media. Optimizing the quality will have the best possible audio/video created for a given bitrate. Optimizing for speed will allow the transcoder to work well on slower systems, however for a given bitrate the outcome would be of a lesser quality. In case your computer is too slow and is often maxed out by the transcoder, you can set it here to optimize for speed and compensate for the quality loss by using a faster network connection, otherwise leave it optimized for quality.

Optimize: ● Quality ○ Speed

Connection Speed and Quality

Choose here the speed of the connection between the media playback device and the media server, this will determine the maximum bitrate that the transcoder will create for any given media so that the playback won't skip due to a network connection which is not fast enough.

Connection Speed: Wired (100 Mbps) Connection Quality: ● Excellent ○ Good ○ Poor

Compression

Increasing the compression will decrease the bitrate and the quality of the resulting media, while decreasing it will improve the quality but will also raise the bitrate (this is as long the maximum bitrate possible for the given connection is not exceeded, beyond which no quality improvement will occur without first increasing the speed of the connection).

Compression: ● Minimum ○ Average ○ Maximum

Decoding Speed

Decoding the media as fast as possible will result in a smoother playback and will allow the playback to start faster, however it can create some compatibility issues with certain media. If you experience media playback delays and you are certain that these are not due to a slow computer or a slow network then try turning this feature off, otherwise leave it on.

☑ Decode the media as fast as possible without taking into account its bitrate

Start with the maximum resolution setting, so that TVersity won't deconvert your ripped DVDs to a lower resolution.

6. Crank Up the Visual Quality

Now, the maximum visual quality you'll get from your streamed media is dependent on two different factors — the quality of the network connection between your PC, and the actual speed of your PC. You see, transcoding is tough work and streaming media is network intensive. TVersity's default settings work reasonably well on an 802.11g network, but the resulting video looks terrible. You'll be hard pressed to stream even DVD quality video across wireless — at least until there's an 802.11n-based solution for streaming video.

Assuming you have a wired network between your PS3 and your PC, you can really ratchet up the video quality. To do that, you'll need to open up TVersity's profiles.xml file, which contains the settings that TVersity uses to determine the proper format to use when streaming to different devices. You can find it at c:\Program Files\TVersity\Media Server\profiles.xml. Open the file in notepad.

You only need to adjust the PS3 section, so press ctrl+f to open the find dialog, and search for PlayStation. That should take you to a line that reads <friendlyName>Sony Playstation 3</friendlyName>. Scroll down until you see the <transcodeTarget> section, and change "video/mpeg16" to "video/mpeg2" in both the video= and onlineVideo= sections. Save and close the profiles.xml file, and then go back to the TVersity client.

Click on the Settings tab, and then go to the Transcoder page. We recommend that you adjust these options one at a time, then save your settings, restart the service (Advanced menu, Restart Sharing), and test playback to ensure that one change doesn't bork your setup.

First, adjust the maximum video resolution, so that TVersity doesn't automatically downconvert your ripped DVDs to a lower resolution. We recommend 1280x720, which is equivalent to a 720p signal. This setting will let you play DVD-quality content at its native resolution, with no conversion or artifacting. If you experience network performance problems, it's a good idea to lower this setting to 640x480 or lower.

Now, we're going to adjust the settings to maximize quality. If you're on a wireless network, your performance will suffer if you enable these settings. First, make sure the box labeled Use DirectShow for Windows Media Encoding is checked and the codec is set to Windows Media Video 9. This will improve performance and quality of the video the system outputs. Finally, set the transcoder to optimize for Quality, the Compression setting to Minimum, and set your connection speed to Wired (100Mbps), with the quality set to Excellent. Click Save at the bottom of the page and then restart the TVersity service by going to the Advanced menu and clicking Restart Sharing.

802.11g: The spec that sets your wireless access speed. Earlier versions were 11a and 11b.

802.11n: The newest speed spec that performs even faster wireless connectivity than the g format.

profiles.xml: The file that includes information on where you're streaming your data from.

bork: To, technically, break your equipment so that it no longer works!

artifacting: When you see blocky boxes on-screen while viewing a video, rather than the smooth lines of the original picture.

7. Watch Streamed Movies

Now, all you need to do is fire up your PS3 and go to the video tab. Your TVersity server will be near the top of the list of sources, and will contain your PC's name. Drill down through the menus to find the video you'd like to watch, and click the X button to view it. Now you're streaming video across your network!

8. Troubleshooting

If you're having trouble getting streaming media to work, there are really three possible problems:

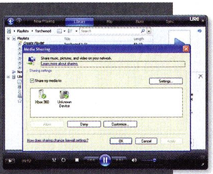
1. codec issues
2. bandwidth problems
3. PC performance problems

If Codec Sniper and Add/Remove programs didn't fix the problems, it's probably easier to back up your computer and reinstall Windows from scratch. No doubt, reinstalling Windows sucks, but troubleshooting codec problems is even worse.

If your CPU and network bandwidth aren't sufficient to transcode your video in real time, you can use the PS3's Copy feature to transcode and copy the video to your PS3's hard drive. To enable that, all you need to do is select the video and press the triangle button. Go down to the Copy option, and be prepared to wait a while. Copying your movies to disk is really the only viable option for Wi-Fi users if you want to watch your movies at anything approaching decent quality.

Remember to check the TVersity web site regularly for updates. PS3 firmware upgrades may impact your network streaming, but the guys in charge of that software are quick on their feet, and will have an upgraded solution within a day or so of any upgrade.

Windows Media Player



Media Sharing

Share music, pictures, and video on your network.

Learn more about sharing.

Sharing settings

☑ Share my media to:

How does sharing change firewall settings?

Microsoft software and Sony hardware working hand-in-hand? Windows Media Player 11 allows you (if you right-click on the Library header, and select Media Sharing) to add your PS3 to a media network. Your PS3 will probably show as an unrecognized device, but believe us, it's your PS3. With your home PS3 network configured, you should see the name of your computer among your Media Server list. Some users have had problems streaming video to their PS3 using WMP11, when photos and music can be streamed without problem. So while it may provide a workable solution for some, TVersity should provide a more consistent streaming option.

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Reviews

Scores | Analysis | Buying Advice | Hardware

RATINGS

★★★★★ **EXCEPTIONAL**

An excellent game that takes its genre to new heights.

★★★★ **GREAT**

Not flawless, but a truly great game and among the best in its genre.

★★★ **OKAY**

An overall positive experience for fans of the genre or subject matter.

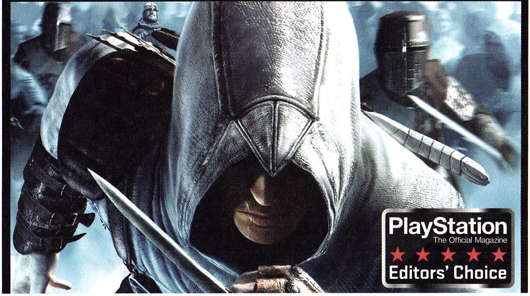
★★ **POOR**

Suffers from several major flaws that really damage the experience.

★ **AWFUL**

Not worth your time or money.

GAME of the month Assassin's Creed p76



Meet the experts delivering your buying advice

Boy howdy, we've reviewed some utter junk in our editorial lives.

ROB SMITH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WORST GAME EVER REVIEWED: A trade-off in moving up the magazine masthead is reviewing fewer games, but getting to pick and choose those I do. Worst ever? Tough, but puzzler *Tesserae* (by Gametek) on Game Boy did make me physically ill, the only game to earn that particular distinction.

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE: *All the pages of the magazine <sniff>.*

NOW PLAYING: *Assassin's Creed, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Call of Duty 4, Rock Band*

BILL DONOHUE
MANAGING EDITOR

WORST GAME EVER REVIEWED: I can't remember the worst game I ever reviewed... and no, that's not a "Senior Moment" kind of thing. It may, however, very well be one of those "Beer Killed That Particular Gray Cell" kind of moments.

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE: *Blazing Angels 2: The Secret Missions*

NOW PLAYING: *Clive Barker's Jericho*, a very loud Moderne (the real kind, with strings), and *SB2*, of course!

RANDY NELSON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

WORST GAME EVER REVIEWED: Up until this issue, I'd have had trouble picking from some dreadful PS one titles, but, fortunately (or unfortunately), *Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am* came along and set an all-time low for the Ran-man's reviews portfolio.

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE: *Assassin's Creed, ATHF: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am, Rock Band, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*

NOW PLAYING: *Rock Band, Call of Duty 4, Assassin's Creed, Guitar Hero III*

TERESA DUN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

WORST GAME EVER REVIEWED: Definitely *Bionicle Heroes*, which is funny because I love *Lego Star Wars.* When I can beat bosses with my eyes closed (I'm not even kidding), you know there's a problem.

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE: *Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law, The Golden Compass, TIme Crisis 4, Swashbucklers*

NOW PLAYING: *Everyday Shooter, High Velocity Bowling*

CASEY LYNCH
FREELANCE WRITER

WORST GAME EVER REVIEWED: *Fugitive Hunter: War on Terror* for PS2 — an abysmal FPS with horrible graphics and a story where every fugitive knows kung-fu, even the final boss, Osama Bin Laden.

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE: *Fire Pro Wrestling Returns, MX vs. ATV Untamed, SOCOM U.S. Navy SEALs: Tactical Strike*

NOW PLAYING: *Ratchet & Clank Future: ToD, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Assassin's Creed, Rock Band, SingStar*

KEN BOUSQUET
ART DIRECTOR

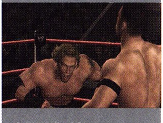
WORST GAME EVER REVIEWED: I'm primarily used as a sparring partner around here. I work behind the scenes. Helping people hone their skills, at my expense. I will say that I did not care for *TOCA Racer* on PSP and leave it at that.

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE: I was on the *FIFA 08* training squad.

NOW PLAYING: *FIFA O8, Pro Evolution Soccer PSP*

Retro View

The big games we were playing this month in PlayStation history.



ONE YEAR AGO...

Guitar Hero II (PS2)
(9.5 out of 10)

WWE Smackdown vs. RAW 2007 (PS2)
(8.5 out of 10)

Destroy All Humans! 2 (PS2)
(8.0 out of 10)

FIVE YEARS AGO...

Metal Gear Solid 2 (PS2)
(10 out of 10)

NHL 2002 (PS2)
(9 out of 10)

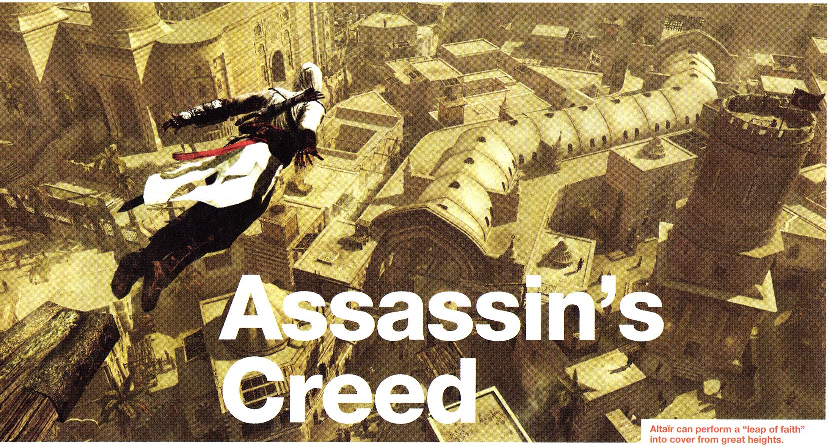
Ace Combat 4 (PS2)
(9 out of 10)

10 YEARS AGO...

Tomb Raider 2 (PS1)
(5 stars)

NHL '98 (PS1)
(4.5 stars)

Test Drive 4 (PS1)
(4 stars)



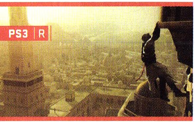
Assassin's Creed

Altaïr can perform a "leap of faith" into cover from great heights.

You can get an early advantage in fights against soldiers terrorizing citizens by quickly running up and stealth assassinating their leader (the one in the most armor) before locking on and initiating combat.

Unique, stylish, open world gameplay – nailed it!

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Ubisoft DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal



PlayStation The Official Magazine ★★★★★ Editors' Choice

No matter how many times we'd played *Assassin's Creed* before getting the final review version, we were always left asking ourselves "How is it really going to turn out?" Yes: the action was great, the massive living game world was cool, and we couldn't get enough of the thrilling rooftop free running. Now pulled together and presented on a Blu-ray Disc, the final experience proves to be an extremely polished melding of *Metal Gear Solid*, *Grand Theft Auto*, and *Prince of Persia* — and that right there should give you an indication of how bold and genre-bending the experience really is.

In screenshots, TV commercials, and even from the back of the box, it's hard to get a real fix on exactly what kind of game *Assassin's Creed* is. Obviously, it looks like an action game, but its superb visual design is just the polish on a unique gameplay experience. Its open world, where you play as you please, is more alive, more believable than anything you've probably played before.

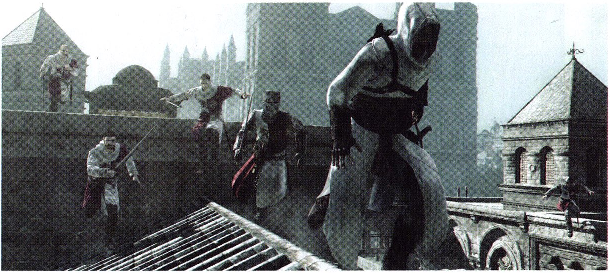
The Plot Thickens

The game's plot is not what you'd expect, and we'll leave it at that so as not to spoil the unfolding experience. Yes, you're an assassin, but there's so much more. You'll learn why the presentation is a mix of medieval and high-tech within the first few minutes. Let's just say that it's compelling, as is the reason that you're out to assassinate nine important historical figures in the cities of Damascus, Jerusalem, and Acre during the Crusades. Your character is Altaïr, a member of a secret society — the Hashashin, from which the word "assassin" is derived — that dates back hundreds of years. Stripped of rank, abilities, and weapons shortly into the game, you must progressively prove your worth to your order, in return regaining rank and gear, in turn opening up your repertoire of slick moves.

Altaïr is like a sort of medieval Batman. He relies on stealth and physical prowess, turning to violence only as a last resort. The game's three cities are sprawling, and, upon entering them, you'll feel like you've been transported to an actual place. In these cities you must think like a real inhabitant of the environment to progress. For instance, you must limit the amount of attention you draw to yourself whenever possible. Pressing R1 takes you from low to high-profile mode; in the former, you can press X to blend in, either quietly strolling apparently deep in thought, or among a group of friendly scholars. Pressing Circle causes Altaïr gently to push aside people on the streets as he passes by, so as not to arouse the suspicion of guards.

City Life

The cities are as unique as they are huge and teeming with activity. There's plenty of opportunity while performing the information gathering that leads up to each assassination — be it through pocket-picking, informants, or eavesdropping — to explore and lay the groundwork for your escape after the hit. This is done by saving citizens from oppressive soldiers, which will gain



Guards will continue to pursue you even onto rooftops until you break their line of sight.

the allegiance of their scholarly brethren, among which, as we alluded to earlier, Altaïr can blend to make it past guard posts into otherwise inaccessible areas — oftentimes to where his assassination target resides. Saving other citizens will earn the aid of their kin — tough guys who will grab enemies who are pursuing you. Of course, it also pays to assess the rooftop paths to the city's assassin's bureau, where you receive your assassination orders and return after the job is done. Some rooftops are protected by guards and archers, which Altaïr can dispatch with stealth kills and throwing knives once he's regained these abilities. (Replenishing your throwing knives by picking pockets is one of the game's most guilty pleasures.) The combat system is much more strategic than in most action games. A large emphasis is placed on dodging, reversing attacks, and overall timing. Sword battles move at an extremely realistic pace and truly make you feel powerful.

The game offers a wealth of other side objectives, such as collecting numerous flags belonging to different orders throughout the land. Each city also has multiple towers for Altaïr to scale, at the top of which you can get a better lay of the land, adding more detail to the city map, and exposing more side quests. The game can be played through in roughly 18 hours, but if you want to do absolutely everything, it can take two or three times as long, especially when you factor in the various small towns and outposts within the kingdom, where Altaïr can take to horseback and explore a vast frontier.

Back to the assassinations: each one requires a careful approach, but each also offers several ways of accomplishing your mission. For example, you can fool your way right into the room with your quarry by blending in with scholars, or opt to take the acrobatic route and make your way above him by rooftop. It's this openness to the gameplay that both refreshes and encourages multiple play-throughs.

A great deal of the game's story unfolds in one-on-one sequences with Altaïr's targets once he's taken them down, and more after he's successfully returned and reported his success to his order's leader. With every kill, you're drawn more and more into an unraveling plot, and made to wonder if the side you're on is really in the right.

Choose Your Own Adventure

Assassin's Creed is a game that is truly meant to be played at your own pace and gives you every opportunity to do so. The game rewards creativity and is a treat for the eyes and ears. Forgive the sometimes long load times and other minor quibbles — *Assassin's Creed* is a resounding success that no one should miss.

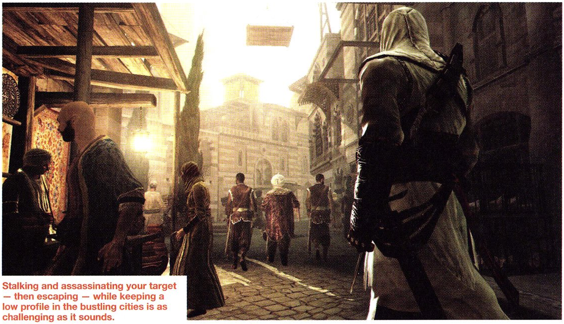
Randy Nelson

★★★★★

Kingdom of Heaven

In-between the Hashashin order's home base and the cities of Damascus, Acre, and Jerusalem lies the kingdom, a vast countryside that Altaïr can explore freely on foot, or, more efficiently, on horseback. The kingdom is peppered with small towns and encampments where you will be able to add to your completion percentage by assassinating Templars and collecting hidden items.

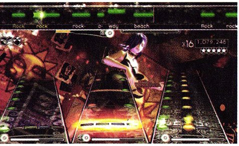
> “Replenishing your throwing knives by picking pockets is one of the game's most guilty pleasures.”



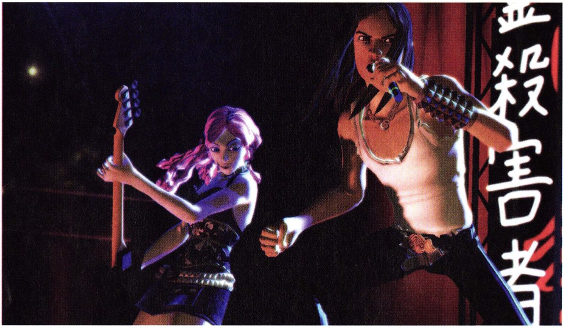
Stalking and assassinating your target — then escaping — while keeping a low profile in the bustling cities is as challenging as it sounds.

Find a good hiding place between your assassination target and the assassin's bureau, and set a player marker on it before taking out your main objective. It'll make it that much easier to find as you're running from guards.

PlayStation The Official Magazine
★★★★★
Editors' Choice



The game can be a blast in Solo World Tour using any instrument, but truly shines in four-person multiplayer.



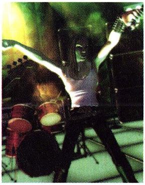
Part of the immense fun of *Rock Band* is buying new clothing and accessories to fully customize your band members.

Hit your local musician's supply store for a microphone stand and a drummer's throne — they're inexpensive and really add to the enjoyment of the game.

Rock Band

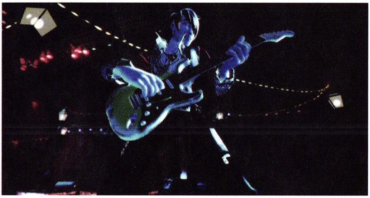
A crazy concept becomes one of the most fun games ever

PS3 PRICE: $169.99 (bundle) ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: MTV Games DEVELOPER: Harmonix



When creating your rocker, you have the option of chosing their personality: Rock, Metal, Punk, or Goth.

Thanks to the translucent interface, it's much easier to see your band rock out than in *Guitar Hero III*.



Not too long from now, we'll look back at music games and refer to their release dates as B.R.B. and A.R.B. — "Before *Rock Band*" and "After *Rock Band*." A concept that had the potential to be overly expensive and complicated has ended up being the best music game ever. It's the Next Big Thing that everyone you know is going to be talking about for years.

Developer Harmonix has taken its experience working on the *Karaoke Revolution* and *Guitar Hero* franchises and leveraged it into the most well-presented music title yet. Quite simply, you can rock out as a four-member band, with someone on microphone, guitar, bass, and drums. It's that last instrument that drew the most raised eyebrows about how it would play, but it actually ended up being the instrument that was most fun and compelling for PTOM's staff and friends.

Ah, friends. You're going to see a lot more of the ones you have and make some new ones as a result of having a *Rock Band* setup at home. While it's possible to play the game solo using any of the instruments, it's the cooperative multiplayer aspect of *Rock Band* that makes it truly phenomenal. The work done to create the "rock band feel" has paid off handsomely — from customizing your characters to the nth degree to touring the (virtual) world, working together to earn as many stars possible on every one of the many songs, most of which are by the original artists. The gameplay actively encourages a united focus.

Points are awarded for playing in unison, and Overdrive power can be deployed to save a band mate who has failed out.

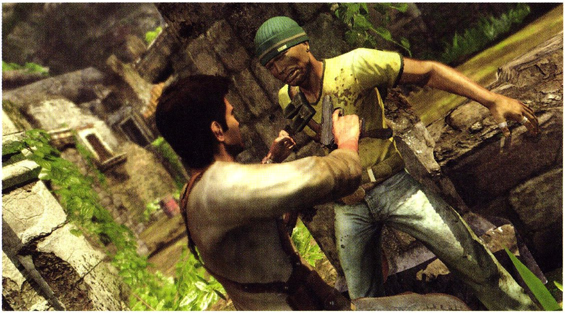
Rock Band really pushes every preconception we have of what a music game can be and do. The first time you need to clap your hand on the microphone as the vocalist to "play" the tambourine or cowbell, you'll know what we mean. And when you nail the final note of a big finish, everyone you're playing with will be high-fiving one another.

A few process and interface glitches make organizing your band trickier than it should have been. Most notable is a confusing system of assigning the "leader" of your band, and the necessity to create a new character to play as on each instrument. If your band leader is a drummer, for example, and isn't around, the band can't play if no one wants to be on drums.

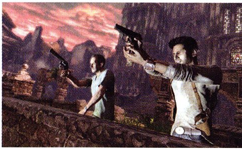
That aside, the wealth of songs on the disc and plans for upcoming downloadable albums and tracks makes this a game we can see being in many PS3 owners' top five lists for months, even years. It's worth every penny; the fun you'll have with friends — and even alone — is truly priceless. Randy Nelson

★★★★★

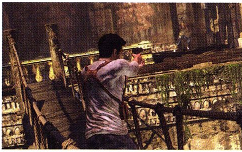
Truly Next-Gen: In addition to "making of" videos and new costumes, the game's unlockables include a "next generation" rendering mode, which applies ridiculous bloom lighting. Zing!



Hand-to-hand combat is well animated, but feels clunky and isn't essential to winning.



Nathan Drake's sidekick, Victor "Sully" Sullivan (left) is a great character we'd like to see return in a sequel.



Headshots will take enemies down with one hit, but you have to be extremely accurate to pull one off.

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Familiar territory with sights and sounds that are off the chart

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: SCEA DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog

Known for its system-defining fantasy platform games *Crash Bandicoot* and *Jak & Daxter*, Naughty Dog makes its PlayStation 3 debut with a more mature mixture of fantasy, action, and the real world in *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*. Sure to go down in history as one of the first games to truly set the system apart from its competition in terms of visual prowess, its amazing looks accent an adventure that, while good, stops short of unleashing any genre-bending, stand-out risks.

Uncharted's biggest strengths lie in its movie-like production values, dialogue, and voice acting. From the very opening scene to the point you're dropped into a jungle to explore creepy catacombs, the game conveys an atmosphere of suspense, wonderment, and adventure like few before it. The cast of heroes and villains is solid, but the real standout — despite his everyman looks — is the protagonist, Nathan Drake. Throughout his dialogue in cutscenes and during gameplay, he evolves from generic adventurer to a genuinely funny and likeable (although unlikely) hero.

The game is at its best when you're in the thick of adventuring. The sheer thrill of leaping across massive gaps atop an enormous, thundering waterfall or navigating traps in dense jungle is enough to make your palms sweat and stir butterflies in your stomach. *Uncharted* manages to deliver a unique visual style in a genre and setting where you'd expect a more generic treatment. *Firefly* composer Greg Edmondson's score is a perfect fit.

Story pacing is best during the first third of its 22 chapters (roughly seven hours of game and about one hour of in-engine cinematics in total). The game has a great adventure vibe and several memorable sequences, including a thrill-ride–like jeep chase. The mixture of puzzle-solving, platforming, and gunfights feels just right — until the game flips a switch and turns action heavy. The thrill of adventure gives way to shootout after shootout, with Nate actually commenting on occasion about the never-ending flood of bad guys. Through a mixture of targeting shortcomings (turning the reticule red when it's over an enemy would have been a quick fix), throwaway hand-to-hand combat, and more than its fair share of die-and-retry situations, frustration mounts all too easily.

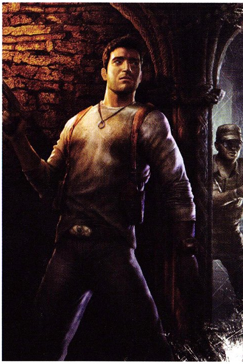
Ultimately, *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* is a fairly standard adventure game at its core that goes from "great" to "good" by the time all's said and done. It's a good tale with an interesting plot twist, and an ending that — while a bit disappointing — leaves a few threads open for the inevitable sequel, where we're hopeful the Naughty Dog crew will pull a *Jak II* and take all the game's good parts to the next level.

Randy Nelson

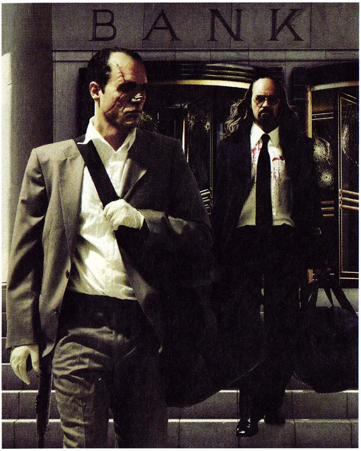
★★★★

PS3 | R

The game gets heavy into gunplay in the later levels.



Kane & Lynch: Dead Men



Both guys are family men: one wants to save his kin, the other killed his.

Sometimes it's good to be bad

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Eidos DEVELOPER: IO Interactive

IO Interactive, of *Hitman* fame, has done something unexpected with its next-gen debut, *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men*: made us sympathize with two truly bad dudes — two killers who, unlike *Hitman*'s Agent 47, demonstrate personality traits and even a little heart.

Kane is a former agent for a mysterious group known as The 7. Lynch is a psychopath who is prone to blackouts when he's not medicated. Kane is willing to do most anything to rescue his kidnapped wife and daughter from The 7 (who he betrayed prior to the events of this game). Lynch killed his family some years ago. Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker they are not. Kane and Lynch are killers, but their story (only Kane's side when playing solo, or both sides when playing split-screen co-op) is enthralling — along the lines of Michael Mann's 1995 film, *Heat* (which was one of the game's inspirations).

Kane & Lynch, like its characters, has issues. Most apparent are the graphics that range from good to near-PS2 quality. The dip in visuals is a trade-off due to how many characters can fit onscreen. (An early, notable example is pushing your way through seemingly hundreds of people in a crowded nightclub.)

Another issue is one of repetition: lots of the same enemies, and lots of shooting to take them down. It doesn't get really tiresome until the later levels, though, which is also when your allies (who usually obey simple squad commands) can become a liability as you try to survive an onslaught of sharpshooters. Backtracking to revive them can exacerbate the frustration.

Yet we found ourselves coming back for more. Maybe it's the cinematic presentation. Maybe it's the betrayal-centered multiplayer, Fragile Alliance. Or maybe it's because we like being bad guys every once in a while. Teresa Dun

★★★½

Your buddies pack a lot of heat , but are kind of light in the brains department.

Choose Your Destiny: At the end of the game, you're given two choices to determine the ending. Choose wisely.

Beowulf

Hardly epic, this one's more of an above average adventure

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Mature
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Tiwak

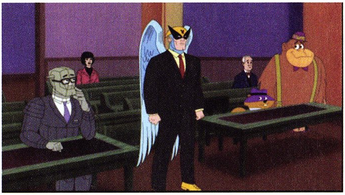
While *Beowulf* doesn't completely shed the stigma that licensed games are by definition mediocre, it does an admirable job of trying to leap beyond your typical hack-and-slash fare. Take the Legacy system, for example: be selfish — focus solely on annihilating your enemies, with little regard for your allies — and you'll become stronger, but your soldiers, the Thanes, will be weak; be heroic — focus on actually rescuing your allies, which you'll have to do pretty often since the Thanes seem to be completely helpless without Beowulf — and you'll lose that individual strength, but your soldiers will benefit. Still, while they can distract enemies, your Thanes are mainly good for opening doors and lowering bridges. Teresa Dun

★★½

Who let the fiery, skinless, rabid hellhounds out?

Vocal Range: Ubisoft got Anthony Hopkins, Ray Winstone, Brendan Gleeson, and Sebastien Roché to reprise their roles from the movie for the game.

Keep an Eye Out: You can gain extra gravitas icons and unlock short scenes through careful exploring.



About half of your time will be spent in the courtroom, surrounded by a host of familiar faces.

Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law

No objection to this mind-taking adventure

PS2 PRICE: $39.99 GENRE: Adventure ESRB: Teen
PUBLISHER: Capcom DEVELOPER: High Voltage Software

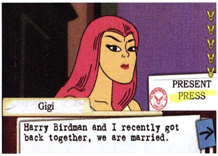
In the 1960s, Hanna-Barbera cartoons captured the imagination of a whole generation, but when those wide-eyed toddlers grew into bleary-faced cubicle monkeys (also called office workers), many of those cartoon characters were forced into retirement. Forty years later, Cartoon Network re-cast some of those characters into new occupations, stamped them with *Adult Swim* toilet humor, and created the television show *Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law*. Now, Capcom has turned that show into a game.

Fans of *Phoenix Wright* will immediately recognize the genre: courtroom adventure. Each of the five cases begins with a crime, a suspect, and Harvey Birdman, a superhero-turned-lawyer, generously agreeing to prosecute or defend. As Harvey, you'll search locales of interest for evidence. In court, you'll hear testimonies and then present evidence to support or contradict people's claims. Present the wrong item and you'll lose one of your gravitas icons, so the challenge is to think like the not-all-that-logical Birdman.

As simple as *Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law* may seem, the game is brought to life by excellent dialogue, true-to-the-show characters, spastic humor, and of course, penis jokes. If that sounds like your cup of teabags, er, tea, then, to paraphrase our favorite lawyer, this is one game you should definitely take.

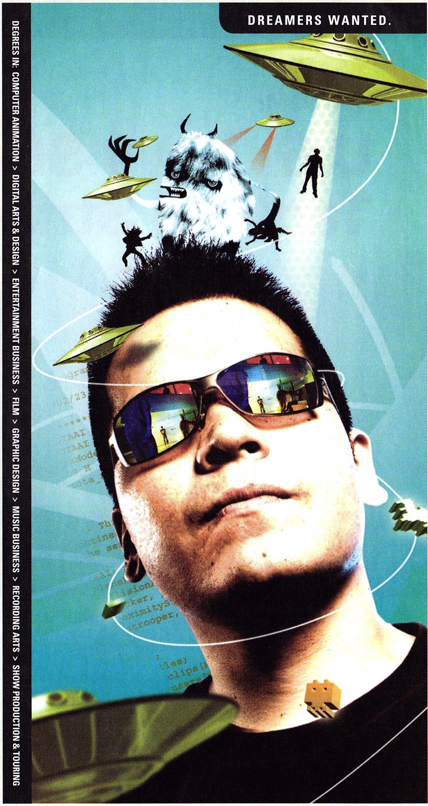
Teresa Dun

★★★★



Harry Birdman and I recently got back together, we are married.

When your so-called wife doesn't even know your name, you know you're in trouble.



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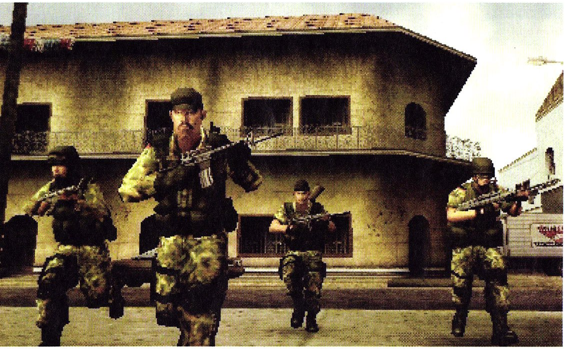
SOCOM:

U.S. Navy SEALs Tactical Strike



Slant Six has used the full CPU speed of PSP to deliver one of the system's best looking games.

Squad-based strategy shines on PSP

PSP | R

PS3 | R

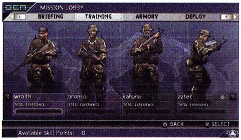
PSP PRICE: $39.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Sony DEVELOPER: Slant Six Games

The *SOCOM* series has always been a squad-based shooter at heart, but *Tactical Strike* swaps your twitchy trigger finger for a strategic command-based design. The result is a very different *SOCOM* experience that will still feel very familiar to fans of the series. The bulk of the single-player campaign centers around taking a four-man squad through a series of missions, clearing territories and setting up patient stings rather than using bum-rush tactics, which, after you get the hang of the controls, is really, really fun. Some *SOCOM* purists may be turned off by the new control scheme, but if you stick with it, you'll find it's worth it. Honestly, it took us a long while to master moving our squad proficiently and we still regularly take a devastating beating when we miscalculate a move.

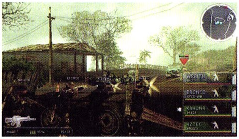
That said, executing a well thought-out maneuver is so much more satisfying than the direct-control *SOCOM* of yore, which seems a bit tired in contrast. In the same way, the multiplayer, which supports two to four players via Ad-Hoc and Infrastructure, is equally fun as you build up your mad *SOCOM* skills, making Tactical Strike a well-rounded addition to the *SOCOM* franchise. Casey Lynch

★★★★

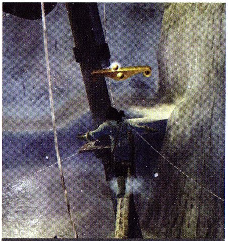
If you don't have one already, you should definitely pick up the official PSP Headset with microphone ($19.99) for playing *Tactical Strike* online.



Your squad becomes more adept with experience.



The payoff for setting up a strong ambush is great.



Lyra's daemon, Pantalaimon, has four animal forms. Switch through them to navigate terrain.

The Golden Compass

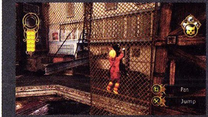
All that's golden may not shine

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Everyone 10+
PUBLISHER: Sega
DEVELOPER: Shiny Entertainment

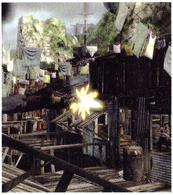
If we were shrinks, we would diagnose *The Golden Compass* with multiple personality disorder — it simply refuses to pick a genre. The game starts out action, becomes a platformer, morphs into stealth, dips its toes into traditional puzzle-solving adventure, bombards you with 30-second-long mini-games, and even has you perform psychic readings, all while you follow the tale of a sharp-witted girl and her animal companion.

With scenes and music from the movie sprinkled in, the game feels an awful lot like an interactive story, and the emphasis seems to be more on movie elements than gameplay. Unfortunately, the shoddy PS2-caliber graphics destroy any cinematic aspirations. Ultimately, *The Golden Compass* proves way too easy, and much of the "game" feels s lot more like "chore." Teresa Dun

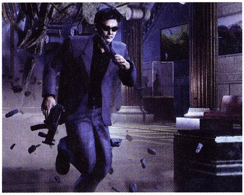
★★



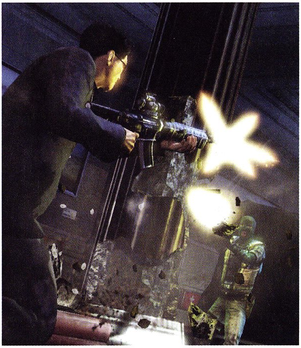
Use Pan's wildcat form to climb walls.



Diving and shooting are two activities that you'll be doing a lot.



Running away isn't usually Tequila's style, but it can become necessary for your own survival.



The visual destruction is delightfully over-the-top.

Stranglehold

Not quite hardboiled enough

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ($69.99 for Collector's Edition) ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Midway DEVELOPER: Midway Chicago

It's no secret: we're huge fans of John Woo's 1992 action epic *Hard Boiled*, a film that has not only influenced modern action cinema (see: *The Matrix*) with its "bullet ballet," but is also the quintessential John Woo flick. (Guns, doves, and Chow Yun-Fat? Check, check, and check.) Which brings us to *Stranglehold*, a game that mostly succeeds at recreating the cinematic *Hard Boiled* experience.

Chow Yun-Fat returns as Hong Kong Inspector Tequila. Wielding two Berettas (or a shotgun, assault rifle, or rocket launcher), he shoots his way through both Hong Kong and Chicago, destroying virtually everything in his way.

That's where the game truly shines: Midway's Massive D technology allows for an unprecedented level of environmental destructibility. You also get to interact with the environment in unique, stylized (albeit scripted) ways; it's always fun to slide down a banister and then jump onto a rolling cart, shooting baddies all the while.

The action itself, though, is nothing new. Run into an area and shoot everyone to unlock the next area. Tequila's special moves — the Bullet Time-esque Tequila Time, the occasional Mexican Standoffs, and the Tequila Bombs (akin to the Loco Moves from Eidos' *Total Overdose*, only fewer and less over-the-top) — help keep it interesting, but the whole single-player experience becomes repetitive as the sub-seven-hour experience progresses. Too bad the multiplayer does little to keep you coming back for more: you might expect deathmatch and team deathmatch to be fun for a bit, but it's not balanced well, and as a whole feels like an afterthought.

Still, the single-player is entertaining enough, with a lot of the fun of John Woo's original movie. Speaking of, it's worth ponying up the extra cash for the Collector's Edition just to see *Hard Boiled* on Blu-ray (though it is unfortunate that the movie has old, awful dubtitles instead of retranslated subtitles). Teresa Dun

★★★½

Red Cliff is John Woo's latest film that was supposed to be his reunion with Chow Yun-Fat until Chow pulled out. He was replaced by Chow's *Hard Boiled* co-star, Tony Leung.

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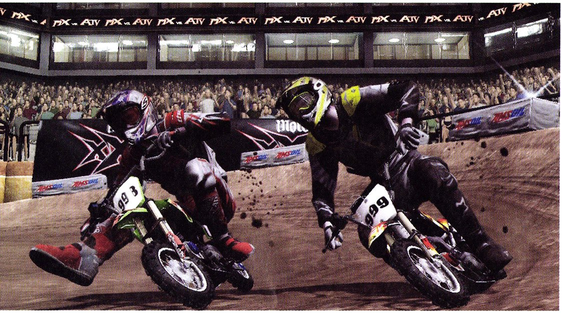
XBOX 360 XBOX PLAYSTATION 3 PlayStation 2 PSP Wii NINTENDO GAMECUBE NINTENDO DS GAME BOY ADVANCE



Traditional MX races may be the most basic of the game, but are still extremely fun.

Like Getting Dirty? Then this is the game for you!

MX vs. ATV Untamed

Another great off-road racer graces PS3

PS3 PRICE: $59.99 ESRB: Everyone TYPE: Racing PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Rainbow Studios

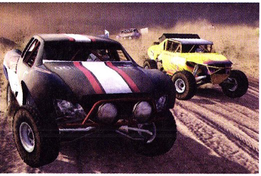
PS3 | R

PS2 | R

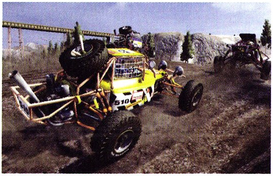
Considering Rainbow Studios' pedigree of excellent motocross and off-road racers, it isn't a shocker that *MX vs. ATV Untamed* delivers everything you'd hope for from the first next-gen iteration of the franchise. The new-for-next-gen engine delivers eight series: Supercross, Opencross, Supermoto, Nationals, Waypoint, Freestyle, Minimoto, and the suspension-punishing Endurocross. In true *MX vs. ATV* fashion, *Untamed* serves up a wide variety of vehicle types in addition to the expected bikes and quads. Everything from sand rails, monster trucks, buggies and offroad golf-karts help mix up the racing — and thankfully the aerial biplane and helicopter races from *Unleashed* were scrapped.

The addition of a tournament chart (think a modified version of the progression chart in *Dirt*) to track your progress is helpful to get an at-a-glance look at your achievements and what challenges still lie ahead. Another nice addition is a practice area you can rip through during load times, which, like some EA Sports games have done, actually makes the wait time fun. If all that's not enough to flood your engine, you can try the five mini-games, two-player split screen, and 12-player online racing; all of which makes *Untamed* great in our book. Casey Lynch

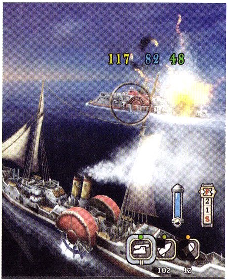
★★★★



Each vehicle type offers its own unique driving challenge on the race course.



The tracks themselves are a thrilling mix of bumps, dips, and sharp turns.



You'll be fighting cowboys in matches for cash... yes, cowboys.

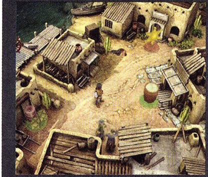
Swashbucklers

Arr, methinks me spies a sinking game

PS2 PRICE: $19.99 ESRB: Mature TYPE: RPG PUBLISHER: Atari DEVELOPER: 1C

We have to give 1C credit for adding a twist on the pirate fad — *Swashbucklers* is set in the Civil War, when the Confederates responded to Union blockades by encouraging loyal businessmen, soldiers, and bums to turn brigand upon the open seas. Unfortunately, that same originality doesn't flow into the rest of the game. Your actions consist of merchandising goods (buy low, sell high), repetitive naval battles, overly simple foot combat, and bulky ship construction. The quest and level up system help pad out the decisions you make, but fail to give the game some much needed depth — you can only take on one quest at a time and you don't need to level up because you're already overpowered. Overall, we recommend passing on this pirating adventure. Teresa Dun

★★



Speak to the sheriff to save your game.

Since *Blazing Angels 2* features just about every Allied and Axis pipe-dream plane that ever existed (even if it was just on paper), one has to wonder why they didn't include the Nazi UFO.

Blazing Angels 2:
Secret Missions of WWII

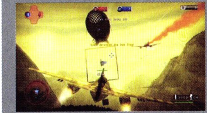
Flights of fancy miss second shot

PS3 **PRICE:** $59.99 **ESRB:** Teen
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Romania

Ubisoft's *Blazing Angels 2* is a young boy's historical WWII fantasy: you and a group of aviator buddies form a top secret unit that can fly any type of plane anywhere in the world without oversight... and you get some help from a sexy secret agent. It's all good fun and it has its moments, but there are a few flaws that sour the overall experience.

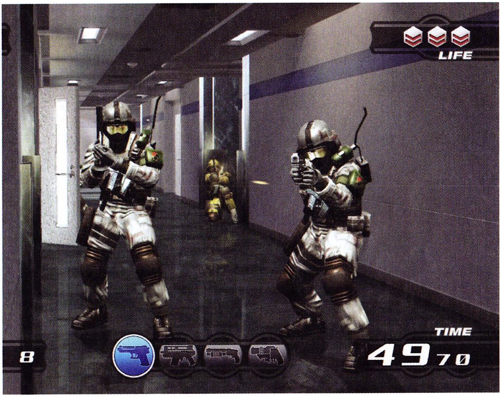
BA2's main draw is the ability to fly some of the more arcane aircraft of the period, as well as some planes that never got off the drawing board. The planes, as well as the cities you'll fly over, are beautifully illustrated. *BA2* also features a multiplayer mode, both online and split-screen.

You face a few situations that are quite impossible: in one level, you must drop your sexy friend onto the top of a moving train... from a single-seat fighter. Wonder if she has her hand on your flight stick? I'm not saying it's not fun, because it is, but as a sequel, a few opportunities to really push the franchise were sadly missed. Bill Donohue ★★★



It's jet versus zeppelin! Place your bets!

The technology in the Guncon 3 can be used in other FPS titles, if developers choose to utilize it. The Guncon 3 can also be a problem for left-handed players.



In Crisis mode, you can choose between a handgun, machine gun, shotgun, and grenade launcher.

Time Crisis 4

Arcade shooting in your living room

PS3 **PRICE:** $79.99 with Guncon 3 **ESRB:** Teen **PUBLISHER:** Namco Bandai **DEVELOPER:** Namco

True, *Time Crisis 4* may drop a clichéd plot — military squad goes terrorist and unleashes killer insects — and plain graphics, but we really don't mind. The Guncon 3 light-gun controller makes story and graphics almost irrelevant, because playing an arcade-style shooter from the comfort of our own couches is just too darn fun.

The game features an Arcade mode, which is almost identical in form to the *Time Crisis* games you'll find in arcades (press a button to jump out of cover and shoot, let go of the button to hide and reload), minus the quarter feeding.

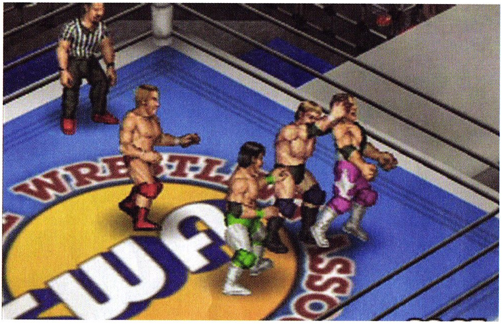
However, "Complete" mode, which sprinkles exclusive PS3 first-person shooter missions in between the Arcade levels, intrigues us more. You'll use the Guncon 3's buttons and analog sticks for movement, camera, and aiming. Your arsenal will consist of five weapons (handgun, machine gun, shotgun, knife, and rifles), though you'll be able to pick up the occasional special weapon, like a rocket launcher. You'll also be able to take advantage of enemy turrets and shoot from vehicles. Admittedly, as an FPS, the levels are only mediocre, but the blandness is overshadowed by the fact that you'll be aiming with a little orange sight and pulling a plastic trigger. An added plus is that you can play the Arcade levels co-op.

Our main concern is price: $79.99 is a lot of quarters to sink on a game that you could beat for 20 bucks at an arcade, and we're not convinced the gun, sensors, and added content are worth the difference. However, with five difficulty modes, an optional crosshair view, and extra mini-games, *Time Crisis 4* should appeal to just about any arcade-lovin' audience... provided they have deep enough pockets. Teresa Dun

★★★★

Guncon 101

With its bright, not-a-real-gun safety coloring, the Guncon 3 isn't the most attractive peripheral on the market, but with two small sensor boxes that slide smoothly on the upper outer edges of your television, at least it's accurate. Two analog sticks rest under either thumb, your right forefinger hugs the trigger, and your left forefinger is within easy reach of the jump and reload buttons.



To succeed, you really have to nail the timing of moves.

The Rename Game: If you're truly dedicated, you can rename your wrestlers to their real names, but it while take awhile.

Fire Pro Wrestling Returns

Don't judge a game by its character sprites

PS2 PRICE: $19.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Agetec DEVELOPER: Spike

PS2 | R

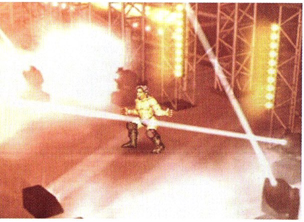
We seriously doubted anything could pull us away from superplexing our way through *WWE Smackdown! vs. Raw 08*, but it turns out we have a soft spot for wrestlers in 2D, armed with industrial fluorescent tubes.

Maybe it's because playing *Fire Pro Wrestling Returns* reminds us of life in the ´90s and all the time we put into *Tecmo World Wrestling* on NES. Or maybe it's just fun to hit Speedo-wearing dudes with barbed wire-covered bats.

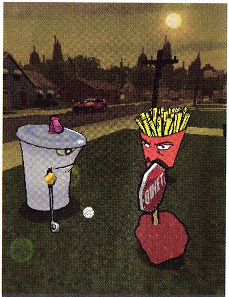
Previously only available in Japan, *Fire Pro Wrestling Returns* provides over 300 wrestlers to brawl with in a slew of often humorous match types. The wrestlers themselves are a mix of dudes we've never heard of and a smattering of beefcakes that share a striking resemblance to many of America's more infamous wrestlers from the days of the WCW; think renamed, doppelganger versions of Sting, Andre the Giant, Terry Funk and the like. Our current favorite match type is Barbed Wire Deathmatch, which promises high-voltage shocks for the unlucky luchadore who gets thrown into the electrified wire ropes. The gameplay is decent, but will throw some players off with its more technically-timed grappling system.

Don't expect much in the way of graphics and sound innovation; there isn't any. The music sounds like a 5th grader fooling with a Casio keyboard, while the graphics make Bandai's *Galactic Wrestling: Featuring Ultimate Muscle* look next-gen. Considering that *FRWR* is under twenty bucks though, there isn't another wrestling title on the market like it right now. Casey Lynch

★★½



PS2 visuals aren't looking so hot in this HD era.



Unaired episode: Four full episodes of the *ATHF* TV show are included on the disc, one of which was never aired... probably because it's so bad.

Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am

Stupid is as stupid golfs

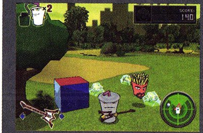
PS2 PRICE: $29.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Midway DEVELOPER: Creat

The problem with *Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro-Am* isn't its lack of ninjas or zombies. The problem is that it's awful.

We're not sure if it's intended to be a real game or a parody of them, but either way it fails. Allegedly a "golf action racing game," it delivers only in that you hit golf balls, hit other characters, and "race" in a golf cart in-between holes. None of this is actually fun. Nor is the game very funny, despite its premise or the A.D.H.D.-fueled silliness of the show on which it's based.

Even diehard fans of the *Adult Swim* cartoon will have an extremely hard time justifying a $30 novelty purchase, because that's the best this game could hope to be. Randy Nelson

★



The gameplay is almost as annoying as the Wisdom Cube's incessant rambling.

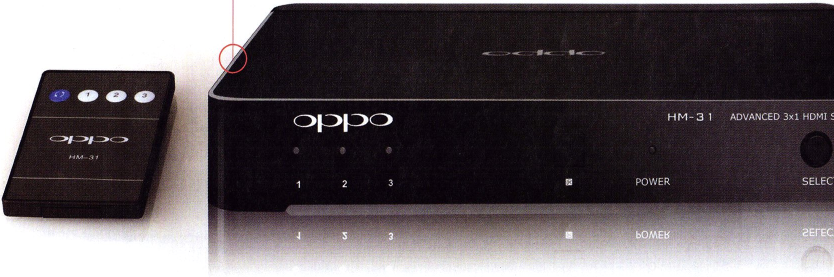
Hardware Peripherals, gadgets, gizmos

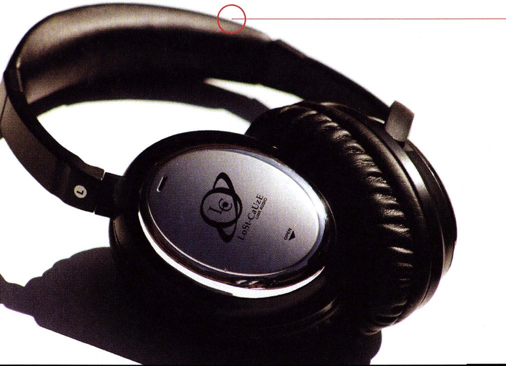
Oppo HM-31

$99.99 | Oppo Digital

Best known in the home theater world for delivering the most bang for the buck with its up-converting DVD players, Oppo Digital enters the budget-minded HDMI switch market with this admirable first effort. Priced the same as our current fave HD A/V switcher, the XtremeMac Xtreme HD, the HM-31 is another example of Oppo's excellent build quality. The unit is sturdy, attractive, and comprised of high-grade parts. It also boasts a mini-jack for an optional external IR receiver, making it well-suited for placement inside closed entertainment centers. Like Oppo's other products, you get great quality for what you pay. In this case, however, it's one output short of XtremeMac's offering, although some enthusiasts will undoubtedly find its black, brushed metal finish more appealing. RN

★★★★½





LoSt-CaUzE Edition Gaming Headphones

$149.99 | Able Planet

Endorsed by the reigning world *Quake IV* champion — a game that has sadly not seen release on PS3 — these noise-canceling headphones perform quite a bit better than their low-end price might suggest (where similar specs can be north of $250). They're a mixed bag in terms of physical design (they're mostly plastic, for instance), but their sound quality, especially with noise-canceling enabled, is rich and detailed. They sound great across the frequency spectrum, with smooth midrange, crisp highs, and enough oomph without being too loose on the low end, making them ideal for music listening as well as gaming use. In fact, they make an excellent travel companion to the PSP. Put on a pair, turn them on, and you'll hear nothing but your game. The included travel case and extension cord are nice touches, and they'll operate for several days of normal use on two AA batteries. RN

★★★★½

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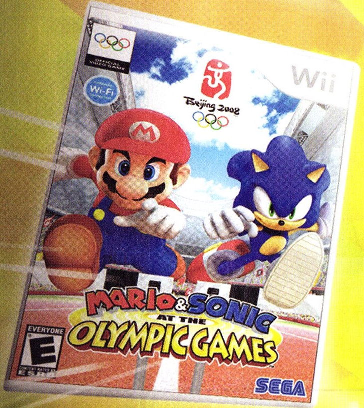
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RP
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GAME BOY ADVANCE

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Even at the lowest ranks, you'll probably never see such easy (and stupid) pickings as these two numbskulls running at you.

» DEVELOPER STRATEGY

CALL OF DUTY 4 MULTIPLAYER TIPS: CREATING CUSTOM CLASSES

Infinity Ward Community Manager Robert Bowling brings you killer advice on building the ultimate soldier

Customizing your weapon load out via Create A Class is your biggest advantage in *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, as it allows you to customize your character to your play style and to save those Custom Classes for use with different game types. Ensure you're prepared for every situation by creating a Custom Class for each of your favorite game types. To help out, I've laid out some good suggestions and personal favorites for customizing per game type in multiplayer:

When Kills Matter

When victory is reliant on getting the most points through kills, then it's important to focus your weapon choices and perk load out around putting guys down, and staying alive yourself. I like to focus my perks on putting guys down fast, and making sure they have nowhere to hide, which means I never go into a Team Deathmatch without:

Primary Weapon: G36c
Attachment: Red Dot Sight
Pistol: Desert Eagle
Perk 1: 3x Extra Frag Grenades
Perk 2: Stopping Power
Perk 3: Deep Impact

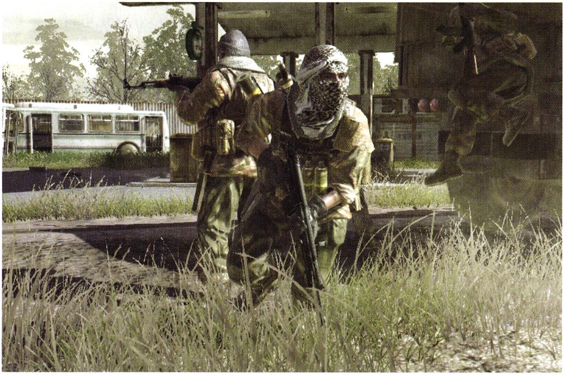
With this load out, you're going to be putting guys down quickly with increased bullet damage on Stopping Power, and tearing through any soft cover they try to use with increased bullet penetration. With the help of the Red Dot sight, you can target them quickly.

Attacking and Defending Game types

When it's all about defending a

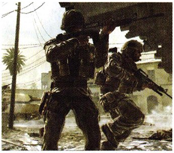
Multiplayer Staff Tips

- **Remember Recoil**
  Aim at your opponent's chest and fire off a quick burst without moving. If you're completely still, the kickback of your gun will paint a line of lead right up to their head.
- **Communication is Key**
  Give a name to key buildings or landmarks on each map, so you can quickly let other squad members know where you are, and where the enemy is hiding.
- **Stick Together**
  Use time-tested squad combat strategies. Your enemy won't expect it. Always stick with a buddy, or, better yet, in groups of four.



Communicate your own position and that of any spotted enemies to your teammates by using landmark names to make teamwork, well, work. In this case, you could say "the buses," or "the gas station."

Bullets will penetrate some walls, so the thicker the cover, the better.



One basic, but very important tip: never go it alone in team based games. Always move in groups.

position or taking one from the enemy, either in Headquarters or Domination, make sure you're packing a lot of explosives to keep the enemy off the objective. If there are constant frags and explosions hitting the HQ, then there's less chance an enemy is going to survive long enough to capture it. Coupled with some heavy suppressive fire, this load out will help you hold down positions more easily and get enemies off objectives before you arrive. So when HQ arrives, make sure you're packing:

Primary Weapon: M4 Carbine
Attachment: M203 Grenade Launcher
Pistol: .45 USP
Perk 1: 3x Extra Frag Grenades
Perk 2: Sonic Boom
Perk 3: Martrydom

This will allow you to put M203s on the target before you arrive, clear out survivors with your M4, as well as defend it with your extra frags that have a larger blast radius thanks to Sonic Boom. Don't worry if they take you out on the HQ, as Martrydom will destroy anyone who attempts to capture the HQ immediately after you've died when you drop a live grenade.

Hardcore Mode and Stealth

There are times when running in blazing will do the trick, and then there's hardcore. Hardcore mode can be applied to any game type, and when it is that means weapons do more damage, friendly fire is on, and there's no HUD. So sights and sounds mean everything. That's when you should be breaking out your Stealth class and making sure you're getting up behind enemies, taking them out, without ever alerting their squad mates. Especially in Hardcore Search and Destroy, when respawns aren't on and giving away your position could bring the entire team down on where you're planting the bomb. That's why I use:

Primary Weapon: G3
Attachment: Suppressor
Pistol: .45 USP
Attachment: Suppressor
Perk 1: 2x Claymores
Perk 2: UAV Jammer
Perk 3: Dead Silence

The G3 is a single shot rifle that's extremely accurate at both medium and long range, so use it to take out guys from afar before you move. Remember, it will fire as fast as you can pull the trigger! Keep everything suppressed, as not alerting the entire team each time you get a kill is essential in winning Hardcore Search and Destroy or Hardcore game types in general. Claymores will help you defend the bomb site, tunnel enemies all down one path for an ambush, or set up traps in high traffic areas, so plant them by the bomb sites or doors into the bomb area for an unwelcome surprise. UAV jammer will keep you off enemy radar, so don't worry about the enemy getting a bead on you from the sky, and use it to your advantage to surprise them. Lastly, Dead Silence will allow you to make little to no noise when you run or move; use it to your advantage to get up behind enemies or to sneak up on someone nearby for a knife melee without them realizing it.

These three load outs should assist you in holding your own in the majority of games. A little something for every scenario and play style is essential to the variety of multiplayer, when you never know what sort of game type could come up next. So be prepared, and customize your load outs to your play style and your favorite game types.

Robert Bowling

Using higher ground gives you an advantage. Not only can you see more of the map the higher you are, but, as in real life, a lot of people never think to look up!

Letters Feedback, Insight, Critical Judgment, and some crazy #%@*!

TOO LATE!

I read that the *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue* demo was only available for download in Japan. So I followed some online instructions and created an alternate Japan account on my PS3. I was then able to download the demo and play it. All I can say is "WOW!" How about letting the readers know about creating a new account to download the *GT5* demo?

Jason Beard, St. Louis, MO

Randy: Actually, Jason, by the time you read this, the *GT5 Prologue* demo will no longer be available on the Japanese PlayStation Store — it was a limited-time-only download. SCEA has not announced plans for a U.S. version of the demo as of press time, but seeing as how a demo of every major PS3 release thus far has made its way onto the U.S. store, you can pretty much bet on one.

WE VALUE VALVE

I'm a big fan of Valve games, but I've noticed that you hardly mention them. For example, *The Orange Box* came out for the PS3 and I've checked your website and the last few magazines and can't find anything about it. Do you people hate Valve with your guts or are you not writing about them because there are so many other game releases for the PS3?

Daniel Rubin, Cupertino, CA

Teresa: Daniel, I'd like to borrow your time machine sometime and travel into the future to play *MGS 4*, *FFXIII*, *DMC4*, and the titles on our most anticipated games of 2008 list. As of press time, *The Orange Box* has still not been released on PS3. It won't be out until December 11, 2007.

Why would we hate Valve? We like cake!

(OFF)LINE'S JUST FINE

I am a huge fan of split-screen co-op games. I hate the fact that developers are taking this feature online, because I have to convince my friends to plop down $600 bucks for a PS3 and another $60 for the game. Are split-screen, offline, co-op games dead?

Matt Printz, Mays Landing, NJ

Teresa: Matt, offline multiplayer is certainly not dead. Let me prove it: *Resistance*, *Kane and Lynch*, *Army of Two*, *Conflict: Denied Ops*, *Time Crisis 4*, *Guitar Hero 3*, and *Rock Band*.

At most, you'll have to buy additional controllers, and just a $400 system!

THEY'RE NOT TALKING

Please tell me that they are going to release that gorgeous "*Crisis Core*" edition PSP in stores stateside. I realize they are limited edition, but is there going to be an easy way to get my hands on one in the near future?

Justin Watkins, Jackson, KY

Teresa: I was wondering the exact same thing! Unfortunately, Square Enix says, "We have nothing to discuss at this time." Shucks.

> "How about letting the readers know about creating a new account to download the GT5 demo?" *–Jason Beard*

Blu-ray Disc

BLU-RAY BLOOPER

Readers who tore off the plastic wrap off our Premiere Issue may have noticed that though we were "pulling out all the stops" the Blu-ray disc of gaming goodies was, to put it bluntly, stopped. Though we worked tirelessly with Sony day and night to try to make the Blu-ray disc happen, for complicated circumstances beyond our control, we couldn't make it happen. We're sorry.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

LIVE AND LEARN

What really bothered me in the Premiere Issue (#1, pg. 9) was Gabe Newell spewing his hate for PS3. He is the second legendary creator to make that statement, the other being Sakaguchi [*Final Fantasy*]. My advice to them is to just shut up. If you don't like the PS3 chip design, don't develop anything for the PS3. If you don't want to make the effort to learn something new, that's fine, but don't attack the system because you are also insulting its users. That's not good business.

Tim Watson, via The Internet

Rob: SCEI President Kaz Hirai in that same Premiere Issue (and in his Tokyo Game Show keynote) addressed developer concerns with a clear plan for enhancing support and communication. When PS3 passes 50-plus million installed units, expect to see new games from both those guys!

TOP10LIST

The Simpsons Game steps on toes

Cooling Off

He's a Hater, Not a Lover

***Metal Gear Solid 4* is coming soon, but whether or not it's PS3 exclusive is another question.**

WHO KNOWS?

I got into a discussion with a GameStop employee about *Metal Gear Solid 4*, and he said that it was definitely appearing on the Xbox 360. I was a little baffled, since the news on the Internet says *Metal Gear Solid 4* is a PS3 exclusive. Is there something I'm missing?

Oz H., Hialeah, FL

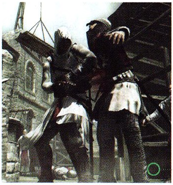
Teresa: As of press time, nothing official has been announced. All we care about is that we're getting it on PS3 for true and certain.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

In your preview of *Turning Point*, the developers said they based technology and weapons on German research at the time. There's an amusing, but also very well written and informative book called "My Tank Is Fight!" by Zack Parsons. It gives full specs, development history, and lots of other information about these historic, would-have-been super-weapons.

Justin Stallone, Albany, NY

Bill: Thanks for the tip on the book, Zack. Sounds like it's right up my alley. Did you know that a lot of America's current weaponry is also based on German WWII designs? Some examples are the M-60 machine gun, the M1A1 tank and, most obviously, our Kevlar helmets, which are based on the WWII German design.



GAMING ALONE

I don't like playing multiplayer games. I use gaming to escape everybody, and often play at times when my wife and kids are sleeping. Are there any statistics showing how important multiplayer games really are to us? I'm 52, so you have the first "No Big Deal" vote in the old timers category.

Jim Cuthbertson,
Oakwood Hills, Illinois

Randy: Multiplayer games and gaming are more popular than ever, especially with the integration of advanced online connectivity in current consoles. That's not to say plenty of fun solo-play games don't exist. Games such as *Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction*, *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, and *Assassin's Creed* are just some recent examples.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

I just wanted a little clarification on some specs between two PS3 systems. Should I buy the 60GB version for more backwards compatibility… or should I just purchase the 80GB version and risk that some of my games may not work? Granted, it says I may possibly be able to download some updates that will resolve this issue. Will I be safer with a 60GB system if I can find one?

Toni, The Internet

Rob: We've got you covered. Check our story on page 6 that should give you all the info you need to make the best PS3 purchase decision for the functions and features that you need for your own entertainment plans.

contact Send us your thoughts and comments to letters@psmonline.com. We're eager to hear what you think about the new magazine, clean look, and refreshed scoring system.

YOUR TAKE

PlayStation The Official Magazine
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Editors' Choice

Our 5-star rating system

"Go back to the number rating system. It is simpler, more intuitive and more descriptive. Everyone is familiar with the concept of a score on the scale of 1 to 10."

Wallace Harvey,
Lewis Center, Ohio

"My favorite thing about the new magazine is the rating system. Making the rating system on a scale of 1-5 with star ratings is probably the best idea a gaming magazine could make."

Ottsel Hero,
The Internet

"The whole "five star" rating thing doesn't work for me at all. The 10 point numbering system was much more detailed and aided me far more in my game buying choices. 8.5 out of 10 tells me much more than 4 out of 5."

John Killinger,
The Internet

Rob: We're sticking with the five stars, and hope you'll read the reviews to get the full information you need to make those buying decisions. We can but dream!

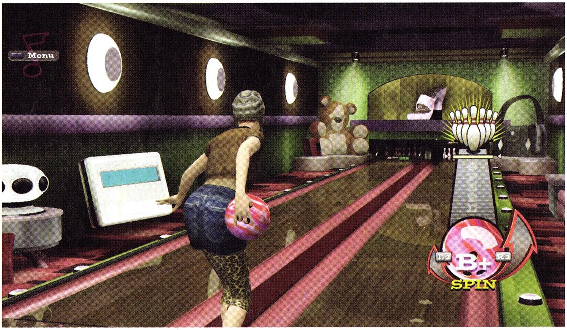
Visit psmonline.com to send us Your Take on next issue's topic.

PlayStation Network Games

Downloadable games for the price of a fancy sandwich. We say Yea or Nay.

+ YEA You'll get full value for your money.

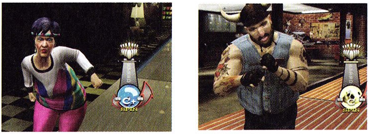
- NAY No legs, no fun, no value.



High Velocity Bowling

PRICE: $9.99 **DEVELOPER:** SCEA San Diego

+ A clumsy-looking sports title that actually hides a pair of sharp fangs, *High Velocity Bowling* is meatier and more challenging than, er, certain other motion-controlled bowling games out there. Strikes, for example, aren't as simple as tossing the ball down the lane as hard as you can. With multiple venues, unlockable (albeit unappealing) characters and balls, and a smattering of mini-tournaments and trick challenges, *High Velocity Bowling* has more than enough to give your arm a decent workout. TD



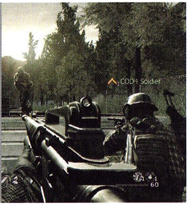
Now you can be any unsavory bowling alley bizarro that you want to be.

Game Night

Call of Duty 4 Showdown... Reloaded!

01.23.08 7pm PST

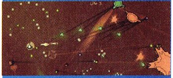
Last issue's *Call of Duty 4* was postponed due to massive technical issues, so let's try again. Think you have the skills to beat down the editors of PlayStation: The Official Magazine? Bring it. Look for members of our staff (RobPTOM, BillPTOM, KenPTOM, RandyPTOM, and TeresaPTOM) online that night. The top reader will get their name and score printed in a future issue! If by some unforeseen circumstances our match must be postponed (again), we'll let you know on our site. (For now, still http://www.psmonline.com.)



PLAYSTATION STORE

Our favorite downloads from the PlayStation Store this month:

▲ UNCHARTED DEMO
Play through the amazing first level of this PS3 exclusive.

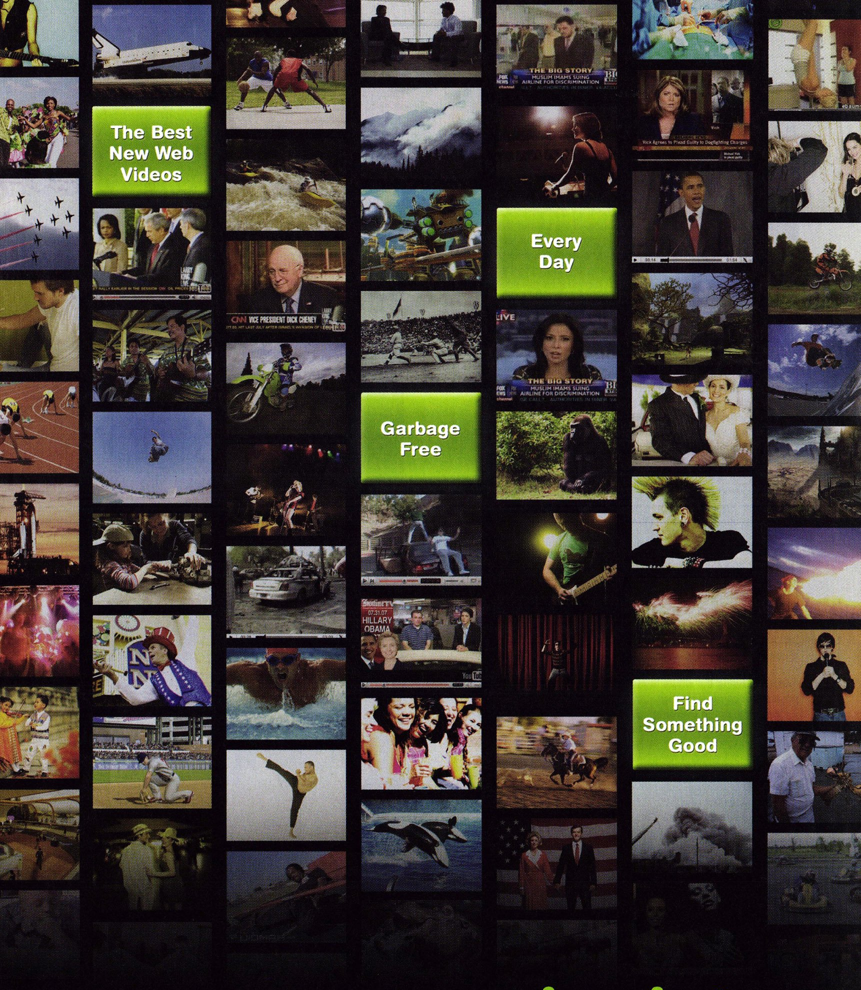


▲ EVERYDAY SHOOTER
It's challenging and beautiful and we just can't get enough.

▲ BURNOUT PARADISE TRAILERS
We love driving and we love crashing, so it's no surprise we love *Burnout* trailers.

▲ DMC4 TGS TRAILER 2
We're itching for *DMC4*... This trailer barely slakes our thirsts.

▲ CLASSY PINK THEME
Yes, it's pink, but trust us. It looks better than it sounds.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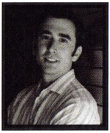
PlayStation POV

Drake's Fortune Post Mortem



Looking back over the entire production of *Uncharted*, there were quite a few ups and downs and several things that went right and more than a couple of things that went wrong. While this could probably be said about the production of any videogame, we started off with one fairly unique problem that spawned several of the issues that we ran into down the line. However, through the hard work of an incredibly talented team, we were able to turn those issues around and ended up in a position that leaves Naughty Dog in an even stronger position than I could have hoped for.

The initial issue that I'm talking about is that when we moved from the PlayStation 2 to the PlayStation 3, we started with NOTHING! At Naughty Dog we had been programming in our own internally developed programming language called GOAL. It was a Lisp-based language and it was a great environment for game development that allowed for very rapid iteration times. However, when transitioning to the PS3, we knew that we wanted to do a lot more sharing of technology between all of the Sony first party teams, so we had to switch to the industry standard of C++. This meant throwing out all of our old game code and starting every last system from scratch. As you can imagine, it took a lot of time to build up our code base to the point that we could even start prototyping gameplay.

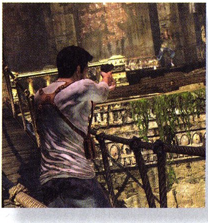
Since we were starting our game code from scratch, I guess we thought it was a good idea to start our tools from scratch as well. This was simply a huge mistake. Anticipating the large increase in size and complexity of next-gen assets, we over-designed our tools and ended up creating a pipeline that was too difficult to use and incredibly unreliable. About ten months into full production, we decided to abandon our new and "improved" pipeline completely, and ended up going back to a system much more similar to the way we were doing things in the past. This ended up being the single biggest improvement we made to production all project long.

Of course, not to over-emphasize the mistakes, we also did a lot of things right. One of the biggest and most important things that we did was to keep our development fluid and flexible. What that means is that we didn't hang onto ideas just because they were in our original design documents. If things weren't working in the game, we would either cut the feature, or stress another area of the game that was working.

Finally, the most important ingredient in the development of *Uncharted* was the team. We have very rigorous hiring practices at Naughty Dog and we only want the very best talent in the industry. This allows us to keep a relatively small team, since everybody is self motivated and extremely artistic (even the programmers!). Once all the technology was in place and the team was firing on all cylinders, it amazed me week after week how much we could accomplish in a short amount of time.

All in all, *Uncharted* was one of the most challenging projects that Naughty Dog has ever embarked upon. Now that the game is complete, I can honestly say that it was one of the most rewarding experiences for me personally, and an accomplishment for the team that I couldn't be more proud of.

Evan Wells, Co-President, Naughty Dog



Next month

In PlayStation: The Official Magazine

God of War: Chains of Olympus is probably the most anticipated PSP game of all time. Or maybe that distinction goes to ***Final Fantasy VII: Crisis Core***. And guess what? They're both hitting the handheld platform soon and we'll have the full story on what to expect for your portable gaming needs.

Plus, the future of PlayStation 3 — from the mouths and minds of the lead developers still tapping into the true potential of the hardware. Beyond 2008, what can we expect, what excites the guys pushing game design to the limits? You'll find out next month.

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RATING PENDING RP Visit www.esrb.org for rating information CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360

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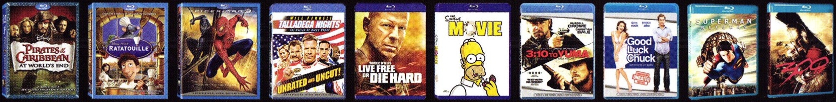
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